



ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

**ANNUAL REPORT 2000
ON OSCE ACTIVITIES**

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I. Introduction

In the period to which this Annual Report is dedicated, the Sixth OSCE Summit Meeting was held in Istanbul on 18-19 November 1999. At the Summit the Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating States discussed security in all its dimensions and assessed the risks and challenges to European security on the eve of the new millennium. Having stressed the need for the international community to develop co-ordinated responses to such challenges, participating States adopted the Charter for European Security. This pivotal document aims at improving the operational capabilities of the OSCE and through its Platform for Co-operative Security paves the way for further and more efficient co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations and institutions. The work of the OSCE field Missions often depends on close interaction with major partners such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the EU and NATO. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) is an illustrative example of the importance of such an innovative partnership. In Istanbul, 30 OSCE participating States also signed the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, adjusting the 1990 CFE Treaty to reflect the changes brought about by the ending of the Cold War.

December 1999 marked the conclusion of the Norwegian Chairmanship which was succeeded by Austria.

As a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE expanded its activities and engagements during the period under review. In 2000, the OSCE continued to strengthen and consolidate its role in the field, as well as taking on new tasks and responsibilities in South Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia.

Kosovo still remains the greatest challenge the OSCE has met so far. As an integral and yet separate part of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is playing a leading role in areas of human rights, democracy, rule of law and institution-building.

In the past year, one of the main priorities of OMIK has been the organization of municipal elections in Kosovo, which were held on 28 October 2000. A particular challenge in this regard was the civil registration by the Joint Registration Task Force (JRT) of approximately one million Kosovars both inside and outside Kosovo. The election process was monitored by a group of observers led by the Council of Europe. OMIK's responsibility for police education executed by the Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS) has contributed to the overall efforts by the international community to strengthen the rule of law. So far, about 1700 Kosovo Police Service Officers have graduated from the KPSS and been deployed in Kosovo.

In December 1999, OMIK assumed responsibility for the co-leadership of one of the 20 administrative departments created under the Agreement on the Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS). The Department for Democratic Governance and Civil Society, formally established in July 2000, is focusing on pro-active work to ensure transparency within JIAS, access to all groups for employment and access to services within the Interim Administration.

OSCE's activities in Kosovo can not be viewed in isolation of the regional context of South Eastern Europe. At the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the OSCE participating States welcomed the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe stressing a key role of the OSCE. The Organization was assigned the lead on particular task forces of the working tables of the

Stability Pact, such as the Task Force on Gender and the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings.

With its long experience and broad presence in the region, the OSCE is particularly well-suited for taking on an active role in pursuing a regional perspective and enhanced cross-border co-operation in South Eastern Europe. In this spirit, the OSCE Permanent Council on 16 March 2000 adopted a Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe. Among the main elements contained in the Regional Strategy is the enhancement of co-operation, thus creating new projects and synergies between existing OSCE presences in the region.

President Milosevic's attempts to contest the results of the 24 September 2000 general elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which clearly indicated victory for the 18-party opposition coalition, led to widespread civil unrest in Belgrade and the collapse of the regime dominated by the Socialist Party of Serbia. Vojislav Kostunica was elected President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was accepted as a new member of the United Nations on 2 November 2000 and of the OSCE on 10 November 2000. An OSCE Rapporteur Mission will shortly be admitted to Serbia; an OSCE Mission will be admitted in due time.

The dramatic change in the political situation in Croatia at the beginning of the year marked a reorientation for the OSCE Mission to Croatia. With a new President and Government in Croatia, a discussion on the composition of the continuing OSCE presence in the country was initiated. Permanent Council Decision No. 345 of 23 March authorized the Mission to maintain up to 225 international Mission members, however, with the possibility of adjusting the overall number of international personnel subsequently as appropriate, in order to reflect further developments in Croatia. In September it was also decided that the OSCE Police Monitoring Group would cease its operations by the end of October 2000 (PC.DEC/373).

Due to the fact that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not adopt the draft election law, the OSCE Mission has played an extended role in the preparation and conduct of the municipal elections in April and general elections in November 2000. The Mission as the only international organization receiving property claims in the field has processed thousands of individual property claims. Return, particularly minority return, is still considered the key indicator to the success of the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While return to both entities is unsatisfactory, it has been particularly low in Republika Srpska of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The year 2000 brought about important changes to the OSCE engagement in the Caucasus with the establishment of the new OSCE Offices in Baku, Azerbaijan, and in Yerevan, Armenia, marking a greater OSCE involvement in the region. The OSCE Office in Baku was inaugurated on 18 July following Permanent Council Decision No. 318 of 16 November 1999. The OSCE Office in Yerevan started operating in the beginning of 2000. Like the OSCE Centres in Central Asia, the new Offices in Armenia and Azerbaijan have broad mandates enabling them to act within all the OSCE dimensions of security.

With the expansion of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia special focus was placed upon the Caucasus. Following a request by the Georgian Government, the OSCE Permanent Council on 15 December 1999 decided to deploy a border monitoring operation to the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic (Russian Federation). This momentous conflict-preventing activity has so far, despite harsh weather and geographical conditions in the area, been carried out successfully by the Mission.

In 2000, some advance was noted in the conflict resolution process of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, following a meeting between the parties in Vienna in July on the initiative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. At the meeting, the Georgian and the South Ossetian sides discussed for the first time issues directly related to future constitutional relationship. A future mechanism for international guarantees emerged as an issue linked to further progress in the negotiation process.

The OSCE continues on insisting that the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya should return without delay to Chechnya to implement fully its mandate as directed by the OSCE Istanbul Summit. Meanwhile, the Assistance Group continues its activities from its temporary location in Moscow.

Central Asia is another region of growing interest to the OSCE. The OSCE Centres in Bishkek, Almaty and Ashgabad have, together with the Central Asia Liaison Office in Tashkent and the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan, developed their activities, with special attention to security, election related issues and the promotion and protection of human rights. Furthermore, the OSCE has put more emphasis on the region's economic and environmental challenges, including water management. With the opening in April of the OSCE Field Office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, the Organization has further enhanced its tool for conflict prevention and early warning in the region.

A further sign of OSCE engagement in Central Asia was the appointment on 15 January 2000 of the OSCE Secretary General Ján Kubiš as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia, following on the work of Ambassador Wilhelm Höynck. The Personal Representative acts on the basis of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the recommendations of the report prepared by Ambassador Höynck.

In addition to field activities, the reporting period was marked by efforts to enhance the operational capacity of the OSCE, in particular its Secretariat, with special regard to the planning and deployment of new missions. The ability of the Organization to rapidly deploy civilian and police expertise is essential to effective conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In the Istanbul Summit Declaration the participating States committed themselves to developing Rapid Experts Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT), which will enable the OSCE to respond quickly to demands for assistance in conflict prevention, conflict management, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Permanent Council Decision No. 364 of 29 June 2000 on strengthening of OSCE's operational capacities called for implementation of REACT, the establishment of an Operation Centre in the Conflict Prevention Centre of the Secretariat (which became operational in September 2000), as well as a restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat.

The restructuring of the Secretariat aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of the Organization and ensuring a streamlined approach to human resources management, as well as establishing a single authority for all issues relating to personnel, staffing and training. The re-organization included the establishment of a Department of Human Resources, thereby uniting under one structure all issues related to personnel working either in the field or head quarters. With this reform, the Department of Administration and Operations was transformed into a Department of Support Services and Budget. In addition, the External Co-operation Section moved from the Conflict Prevention Centre to the Office of the Secretary General.

In accordance with the framework for co-operation between the OSCE and its partner organizations, established by the decisions of the Lisbon Summit (1996) and the Copenhagen Ministerial Council (1997), and in line with the provisions of the Platform for Co-operative

Security, a wide array of consultation mechanisms were utilised in 2000. During consultations with partner organizations particular attention was paid to the strengthening of mutually reinforcing activities in the field. The Section for External Co-operation has, in accordance with Permanent Council decision No. 364, been charged with the implementation of modalities of co-operation together with other sections in the Secretariat, in accordance with part II of the Platform for Co-operative Security. Stemming from the commitments made in the Platform, the Section for External Co-operation has for the first time prepared an Annual Report on interaction between organizations and institutions in the OSCE area.

Within the regular framework of consultations with partner organizations*, the 'tripartite' meeting (UN and its agencies, CoE, OSCE and its institutions, EC, ICRC and IOM), the '2+2' high-level and expert-level meetings (CoE and the OSCE), the target oriented meeting (same composition as the 'tripartite' meeting but at senior expert level), and working level meetings were used to exchange views and identify areas of collaboration. Participation of international organizations at the Istanbul Summit, at the Annual Heads of Mission meeting (CoE, UNHCR, UNOG and IOM), at the 8th Economic Forum, at the human dimension meetings and at the meeting of training experts (CoE, UNHCHR, EU) contributed to further deepening of co-operation.

This year the first information sharing meeting on Central Asia was organized with partner organizations. The meeting focused on regional challenges and maximising the use of international resources.

The signing of a *Common Catalogue of Co-operation Modalities* between the two Secretaries General of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, this year, further reinvigorated mutual reinforcement of action, in addition to attempting at guaranteeing institutional memory. The Council of Europe secondments to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, continue to be a useful and an innovative mode of co-operation. OSCE field Missions continued utilising, in particular, the Council of Europe's capability of assistance in legislative reform, through various consultations and exchange of information.

The OSCE continued to promote its relations with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, currently comprising, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia, as well as with its Partners for Co-operation, Japan and Korea. An OSCE Mediterranean Seminar was co-organized with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan last December 1999 on the Implementation of Human Dimension Commitments, while this year, the annual event was co-hosted with Slovenia. Representatives from both the participating States and the Mediterranean Partners met in the Slovenian coast town of Portoroz in October this year to discuss, Confidence building measures and confidence and security building measures: The OSCE Experience and their Relevance for the Mediterranean Region.

For the first time, there will be an OSCE-Japan Conference which will convene at the beginning of December 2000 in Tokyo to discuss, Comprehensive Security in Central Asia – Sharing OSCE and Asian Experiences. A decision to host an OSCE Seminar in Seoul was taken by the Permanent Council on 9 November 2000 (PC.DEC/377).

Thailand was welcomed as a Partner for Co-operation on 9 November 2000, upon the adoption of a decision of the Permanent Council. Previously, Thailand had organized a

* For more detailed information about co-operation and interaction between the OSCE and other international organizations and institutions, see the *Annual Report of the Secretary General on interaction between organizations and institutions in the OSCE area*.

Workshop in Bangkok at the end of September 2000 on 'Thailand and the OSCE: The Way towards Future Co-operation', and invited the Secretary General of the OSCE to deliver a key note address.

In the reporting period, ODIHR continued its normal activities of implementing democratization and election observation programs in OSCE participating States and started to concentrate increasingly also on consolidating its programs in these fields. ODIHR refined its projects and focused on ensuring proper follow-up, while at the same time retaining the flexibility characterizing the institution. Among the activities pursued by ODIHR during the reporting period can be noted a strengthening of the efforts to improve the situation of Roma. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in April 2000 issued a Report on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area, which focuses on the complex problems faced by Roma populations in several OSCE participating States and provides recommendations on how to deal with these problems.

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities continued to engage in a wide range of issues in the past year. Among the areas of special focus of the High Commissioner in 2000 can be noted inter-ethnic relations in Central Asia, State Language Laws in Estonia and Latvia, and the issue of higher education in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Romania. A conference on The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life was organized by the High Commissioner in May in Vienna.

In the period under review the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, among other issues, paid special attention to the media situation in Belarus, Russia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In March 2000, the Representative presented his second Yearbook 1999/2000: Freedom and Responsibility. The Yearbook outlined the activities of the Representative and his Office and provided a forum for European, American and Russian authors to present their views on freedom of expression and discuss such issues as reconciliation in South Eastern Europe.

In the reporting period the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Helle Degn of Denmark, fulfilled her second term in Office and was succeeded by Adrian Severin of Romania, who was elected President in July 2000 at the Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly. During her term in Office, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly actively worked for strengthening of democracy, emphasising transparency, accountability and openness as essential elements of a modern international organization. In developing and promoting mechanisms for prevention and resolution of conflicts, the deployment of parliamentary *ad hoc* Working Groups and Democracy Teams added a new and growing dimension to the Parliamentary Assembly. During the past year, the work of the Democracy Teams, for example the Democracy Teams on Belarus and on Moldova, has been intense and contributed positively to the overall activities of the OSCE.

With the adoption of the Charter for European Security and the restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat, the reporting period has in addition to expansion of OSCE activities in the field, also seen the enhancement of the Organization's operational capabilities.

II. Activities in the Field

1. OSCE Field Activities

1.1 OSCE Presence in Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania provides advice and assistance to the Government of Albania in the fields of democratization, the rule of law, the media, human rights, election preparation and monitoring and the development of civil society. The Presence is also mandated to provide the co-ordinating framework within which other international organizations can play their part in their respective areas of responsibility, in support of a coherent international strategy for Albania. Furthermore, the Presence monitors the collection of weapons and observes the borders with Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and continues with its efforts to defuse political tension and to create the conditions for dialogue and compromise. Its role as political mediator acquired a particularly high profile during the reporting period, which coincided with the Government's preparations for local government elections on 1 October.

The staffing table of the OSCE Presence in Albania (including drivers, security guards and cleaners) currently provides for 121 positions, although not all are now filled. Of these, 40 posts are for international staff members and a further 81 are to be filled by national staff. The field stations account for 24 international and 25 national posts.

Co-ordinating framework: Friends of Albania (FoA). Since October 1998, the Presence's activities have been strongly supported by the local and international FoA Groups. Set up in the aftermath of serious rioting in Tirana, the FoA brings together representatives of all the participating States and international organizations active in providing financial support, technical assistance and other forms of aid to help Albania realize its potential. In accordance with the clearinghouse function in its mandate, the Presence seeks to provide a flexible co-ordinating framework, in concert with the Albanian Government, to support the development of a coherent strategy for international assistance. The local group, which meets in Tirana under the chairmanship of the OSCE Head of Presence, is engaged in a regular exchange of information to facilitate, co-ordinate and monitor international efforts, whilst at the same time encouraging the Government to tackle a number of key political and economic reform issues. Co-ordination meetings on a wide range of issues take place regularly at the headquarters of the OSCE Presence in Tirana to review progress and to identify problems in donor/government implementation of programmes and projects.

Some modifications to the operational structure of the FoA have been proposed by the Presence in order to facilitate greater discussions of policy issues and to enhance donor co-ordination. Whilst many issues have been treated at the political level in the past, particularly in the area of law and order and the rule of law, a regular rotating meeting schedule has been proposed for technical-level meetings in order to pursue issues on a more consistent basis. Given the importance that the Stability Pact plays in the region, new groups have been created within the FoA to reflect the Pact's structures, as a way of supporting Albania's progress more effectively. These groups include; anti-trafficking, asylum/migration, demilitarization (covering ammunition disposal, demining and weapons collection), ombudsman support and anti-corruption.

A fourth international FoA meeting was held in Vienna on 28 February; at this meeting, Albania's main international partners expressed their support for Prime Minister Meta's pursuit of law and order and anti-corruption as a primary focus. The Friends reaffirmed that the

priorities facing the Government were to maintain the fight for public order, to continue institutional reforms to fight corruption, to establish a sound framework for the forthcoming electoral processes, to maintain macro-economic stability, to harmonize budget allocations and to promote environmental protection. These conclusions have had considerable resonance on the domestic political scene and have succeeded in keeping law and order issues high on the political agenda of the government and the parties for the rest of the year. Regular meetings of the FoA Group on elections throughout the year have managed to guide the preparatory process along and to promote the collective voice of the international community in support of peaceful and transparent elections.

Support for the government. The Presence has provided essential advice and support to the Albanian Government and to Prime Minister Meta and his Ministers of Local Government and Public Order in particular. Under the Meta Government, the rule of law has been established in virtually all parts of Albania, and a programme for rehabilitating the country's infrastructure has been put into effect. At the same time, the Presence has been careful to maintain good working relations with all the political parties, including the main opponents of the Government. This has been particularly important during the pre-election period, when last-minute transitional provisions in the electoral code affected the make-up of lower election commissions, and difficulties associated with the newly computerized voter registration system became politicized.

Local government, electoral process and voter registration. In preparation for the local elections, the Presence provided political, legal and technical assistance to the Albanian authorities. It hosted a multi-party working group to draft an electoral code conforming to international standards, which was adopted by Parliament on 8 May. The Presence was also a partner in the multi-agency project for the development of a transparent and accurate computerized voter list and the distribution of voter identity cards. The Presence provided political assistance to the other project members, including the Ministry of Local Government, the UNDP and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). It also organized an international enumeration observation mission of 25 election experts, who monitored the collation of voter data through a door-to-door registration process in June and July. In addition, the Presence provided logistical support and advice to the ODIHR observation mission that was deployed to Albania from August to October.

The Presence maintained close links with the Ministry of Local Government and with local authorities on local government issues. In support of the Decentralization Task Force, and in co-operation with international partners, the Presence organized decentralization round tables to discuss draft local government laws with local authorities. There was also a focus on trans-border co-operation between local authorities, with the assistance of the OSCE field stations, especially in the Korca region in the south-east of the country.

Parliamentary observation. The Presence has continued to carry out parliamentary observation activities, covering all plenary sessions and reporting on them to the OSCE participating States, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament and the Albanian parliament. During this period, some very important pieces of legislation were passed, several of which the Presence's legal officers assisted in drafting. These included: the new electoral code, and laws on the State police, the civil service, expropriation, radio and television, and the use and control of speedboats. Among the more important parliamentary decisions taken were those on the setting up of the *ad hoc* Stability Pact Commission and the institution of the Ombudsman. The Parliamentary Observation officer maintained regular contact with Members of Parliament from the various political parties, as a

channel both of political reporting to the Head of Presence, and of liaison between the parliamentary commissions and the Presence as a whole.

Rule of law, judiciary and human rights. In the area of legislation, the Legal Counsellor's Office (LCO) provided advice on, and monitored changes to, pieces of legislation as they made their way through the legislative process. The LCO also organized and carried out several projects with the goal of promoting legal facilitation and implementation. As a follow-up to its work on the law on the status of the civil servant, the LCO in conjunction with the Department of Public Administration organized a series of discussions that took place throughout Albania, on local government administration and the civil service law. Recognizing the need for better communication between the various branches of law enforcement, the LCO also organized several meetings to consider the relationship between the prosecutor's office, the courts and the police in municipalities throughout Albania. Since passage of the Law on the People's Advocate (commonly known as the Ombudsman), the LCO has become an active part of the support group known as the Friends of the People's Advocate, which consists of donors, members who can provide technical legal assistance and the People's Advocate and his Commissioners.

The LCO has continued its civic education initiative on the constitution. In conjunction with OSCE field stations, the LCO has conducted seminars on the constitution in several high schools and a few colleges throughout Albania, for the purpose of teaching basic constitutional principles to young adults in all areas of the country. The LCO is also in the process of transcribing the constitutional debates and intends to work closely with the parliament to edit them and transform them into a publishable format.

At both the University of Tirana Law Faculty and the Magistrates' School, the LCO focused on developing institution-building capacity and providing technical legal assistance. The LCO taught courses on legal writing and reasoning at both institutions, and many of the LCO lawyers teach their own courses at the law faculty. Through ODIHR, the LCO also provides human rights lawyers to teach at the law faculties in Shkodra and Tirana.

In the area of donor co-ordination, the LCO organized and chaired FoA sector meetings on justice reform, organized donor strategy meetings on property law implementation and reform and advised the FoA Co-ordinator on a wide variety of legal issues that have implications for other FoA sectors. The LCO frequently provided legal assistance and advice to various offices in the Presence headquarters. The LCO also received numerous requests for legal advice from the field stations in such areas as political dismissals and appointments, tax laws and other economic legislation, illegal immigration, electoral activities, property disputes and court observation.

The international adviser to the public prosecutor continued to provide advice to this sector of the judiciary on how to handle specific cases and prosecutions. Prosecutors in Albania have tremendous power in the criminal justice system, but do not always have the experience or training to determine the best course of action to take on specific cases, including when to prosecute and when to dismiss. Advice has also been given about how to evaluate evidence, both for use in court and to determine whether further investigation may be necessary. Advice has also been provided to improve individual legal analytical skills and to awaken a consideration of the many ethical questions that are part of a prosecutor's job.

Human Rights Alert Programme (HRAP). The HRAP forms part of the Legal Counsellor's Office. Over the past year, the focus has been on cases involving police brutality, failure to enforce court judgements and judicial observation. Regular meetings were held with

the Minister of Public Order to discuss these types of cases. Important court hearings, such as those related to the events of 14 September 1998 (the Hajdari murder) continued to be monitored. Recently, emphasis of the human rights office shifted from the investigation of individual complaints to support for the State structures involved in human rights. Concentrated efforts have been devoted to the newly established Office of the People's Advocate. The human rights officer (HRAPO) played a full role in the setting up of the Office and its development through the Friends of the People's Advocate, and continued to maintain close links with it, attending regular formal and informal meetings.

Over the past 12 months, the HRAPO has assisted the FoA in its efforts to continue the fight against trafficking by providing advice and assistance, as well as by arranging and supervising meetings of the various working groups. The HRAPO was also engaged in the project to regularize police complaints systems, which involved various international police advisory bodies as well as the Office of the People's Advocate.

Weapons collection programme. The Presence and the field stations have been monitoring the Government's weapons collection programme. Although the initiative is to be applauded, the awareness campaign and the provision of additional resources for the police forces to carry it out have both been inadequate. So far, about 100,000 weapons have been collected out of an estimated 700,000 that were looted in 1997. This means that large numbers of weapons, and associated *matériel*, remain unaccounted for, heightening the risk of armed incidents. Some 30 people a month are victims of violent incidents, often involving weapons. This situation has not been helped by a recent parliamentary decision to extend the initial voluntary phase of the collection programme for a further two years, which has provoked condemnation.

Media development, press and information. In 1999, the Press and Public Information Office (PPIO) was restructured and reinforced with staff and equipment. It covers a range of activities in two main categories: public relations for the Presence and media development. The Office is particularly active in providing the Albanian parliament with advice and expertise during the ongoing process of reform of media legislation, in close co-operation with the media NGOs active in Albania. The PPIO assisted the National Council of Radio and Television in the licensing process of the electronic media. It has actively contributed to the drafting of the Public Radio and Television Statute and the Electoral Code. The Office monitored media activities in Tirana as well as in the provinces, and devoted particular attention to the human rights situation and the implementation of a new awareness programme concerning the media's responsibilities and ethics. The PPIO assisted journalists and owners with advice, and has also been used as a mediator in controversies.

Economic issues. In the economic field, the economic and environment officer (EEO) worked closely with the Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, business development agencies, business associations and chambers of commerce. This office provided members of the Presence and the field stations with an overview of developments in this field and encouraged national and international initiatives in the areas of investment promotion and support to small-scale and medium-sized enterprises. It also took part in the working group for the Stability Pact Investment Compact and contributed regularly to the country fact sheet for Albania. The EEO is a member of the working group for the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme, which is co-sponsored by the World Bank and the Government of Albania. This is a major project with far-reaching aims and, through membership in this programme, the EEO was able to contribute with the collective knowledge and experience of the field stations regarding many regional issues, including civil society and local government.

Environmental issues. In the environmental sector, the EEO worked in close cooperation with the National Environmental Agency (NEA), the Ministry of Public Economy and Privatization, the Ministry of Health, the Public Health Institute, the Academy of Sciences and international organizations such as the UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank. In conjunction with the World Bank, the EEO organized the first donors' meeting on the environment in Albania and also produced a conference catalogue including an overview of Albanian environmental institutions, legislation and government strategies. The catalogue also included a summary of donor support provided to Albania since 1991. This office provided background information to the Ministry of the Public Economy and Privatization for a draft law on the administration of hazardous substances, and the EEO maintained close working relationships with Albanian environmental NGOs and many Members of the Albanian Parliament. Before a debate was initiated on the need for an Albanian ministry of the environment, the EEO provided interested members of parliament with background information on environmental problems and recent EU developments in the framework of Agenda 21.

NGO support. In conjunction with the field station at Peshkopi, the NGO and Gender Adviser (NGOGA) organized, in the Diber region, the second in a series of OSCE conferences designed to allow rural women to discuss issues of importance to them. The NGOGA collaborated with the ODIHR, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bosnia and national experts to develop a course on policing the rights of women: domestic violence, prostitution, and trafficking. This will be included in the curricula of two police training missions in Albania.

The Presence offered logistical and funding support to the Albanian gender task force project, Women Can Do It, designed to prepare female political candidates for office. With the support of the field stations, the NGOGA has conducted an assessment of the stages of development of 126 Albanian NGOs and their awareness of the role of civil society. NGOGA has funded four projects in Berat, Korce and Tirana, focusing on trafficking, the environment, and women entrepreneurs and, at the request of the female members of parliament, NGOGA was working with the public affairs office of the US Embassy to create a political leadership skills training course.

Security. During the period, the Presence updated and rewrote the Standing Operational Security Procedures and made arrangements with the Italian military contingent in Durres for emergency casualty or medical evacuation for international members of the Presence. The Military Liaison and Security Officer (MLSO) has initiated a monitoring system which summarizes monthly security incidents and more easily defines the prevailing security situation. Advice was given and security arrangements made for the deployment of the enumeration observation monitors in June and July and the ODIHR election monitoring mission. Close liaison was maintained with the police and military authorities to assist in the administrative procedures associated with weapons collection, and the MLSO routinely advised the Head of Presence on matters related to safety and security, including cross-border issues, and continued to liaise closely with bilateral missions on security matters.

Field stations. In 1999, it was proposed that the Presence should establish field stations in all 12 districts of Albania by rerolling and relocating existing border monitoring resources. At the moment, the Presence is represented in 11 locations around the country, including the Presence headquarters in Tirana, and has permission to open a final station in Lezha as soon as funds become available. Currently, stations are located in the regional capitals: Shkodra, Kukes, Peshkopi, Korca, Gjirokaster, Vlora, Durres, Elbasan, Fier and Berat. This new

deployment provides OSCE representation to all the previously vacant central regions of the country and, at the same time, satisfies the Albanian Government's desire for the OSCE to become more involved in the government decentralization process. This spread of assets has been of particular value during the run-up to the election, and has enabled the Presence to closely monitor the Government's weapons collection programme and to take a much greater interest in regional and local affairs.

1.2 OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2000, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continued its activities relating to elections, human rights monitoring, democratization, the media, regional stabilization, and the press and public information. However, much of the Mission's work during the past year focused on the organization and administration of the municipal elections on 8 April and the general elections scheduled for 11 November. The continuing absence of an election law for BiH, after the failure of the BiH authorities to pass the draft election law, brought about a situation in which the OSCE had to organize and finance another round of general elections under its provisional rules.

The Mission's work over the past year was also affected by regional developments. The changes in Croatia resulted in declining financial support for the Croat-controlled parts of the country, while the events in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia affected the developments in Republika Srpska in multiple and complex ways. However, through its different activities, the Mission endeavoured to seize the opportunities afforded by the regional context.

During the period under review, an underlying theme of all the Mission's activities was the question as to whether support for nationalist parties, which advocate a future dominated by issues of ethnicity and nationality, will continue, or whether other parties, which advocate the primacy of economic development over ethnic issues, and stand for pragmatism rather than irreconcilable nationalist dreams, will be able to clip the nationalists' wings. In the near and medium-term future, much depends on the outcome of the general elections in November 2000.

In 2000, Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed significant positive developments, but at the same time some much-hoped-for goals were not achieved. On the positive side, the return of refugees finally picked up momentum, with the number of returnees now over-stretching international capacities for delivering assistance. On the negative side, the prevailing paralysis, and the obstruction by nationalist politicians of the work of joint State institutions, was noted. This resulted in a continuing absence of important legislation on economic and financial reforms and, notably, the absence of an election law.

Elections. The failure of the BiH authorities to pass the draft election law represented a major setback for nationalization activities, and led to an enlarged role of the Mission in the preparation and conduct of the general elections on 11 November 2000. Therefore, in addition to fully administering the municipal elections in April 2000, the Mission was tasked by the Permanent Council to undertake general elections at a similar level of involvement (PC.DEC/350).

One of the main goals of the Elections Department was to provide formal and operational training for selected national staff members, in order to prepare them for roles of greater responsibility within the future election administration of BiH. More than half of the Department's branches were 'nationalized' and run with no international presence. Through the

preparation and conduct of the municipal elections, these national staff members added substantially to their experience in all aspects of election administration.

To compensate for the absence of a permanent election law, as many of the provisions from the draft election law as possible were incorporated into the provisional rules and regulations governing the two elections held in 2000. Another objective was to refine the election administration components to a point where they can be efficient, effective and sustainable, within the capacity and resources of the governments of BiH.

Human Rights. In the past year, the Human Rights Department concentrated its efforts on property law implementation. The issue of return, particularly minority return, is still considered the key indicator to the success of the Peace Agreement in BiH. The most significant remaining obstacle to this is the difficulty experienced by pre-war occupants in repossessing their houses and apartments. Two years after the passage of the property legislation, the claims process has begun to gain momentum in a few municipalities. Nevertheless, fewer than 56,000 claims (of the 211,055 claims filed) have been adjudicated. Of the decisions issued, less than 11 per cent (22,261 of the claims filed) have resulted in the return of accommodation to the pre-war occupant.

Regarding the property issue, the human rights officers (HRO) continued to receive hundreds of individual complaints, and were the only international representatives receiving clients with property concerns in the field. The HROs assisted the Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP) Focal-Point network, developed by the international community, with regular monitoring of the local authorities' efforts to implement the property repossession laws, and facilitated the inter-municipality exchange of housing data. The OSCE efforts have resulted in increased property law implementation throughout the country. The Department also closely monitored expropriations, allocations of socially-owned land, and the privatization of apartments, to ensure that minority and socially-disadvantaged persons' rights to property are protected, and worked with the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in preparing legislative responses to property issues.

On return and sustainability, efforts concentrated on discrimination in employment, education and reconnection of returnees to utilities. HROs in the field monitored claims by workers who were wait-listed or dismissed from their jobs during the war. At the policy level, the OSCE participated in the development of a paper articulating (for the first time) a standard by which public and private employers in BiH can mark success in terms of establishing integrated and pragmatic approaches to non-discriminatory hiring and labour practices. On education, the Department played a pivotal role in facilitating progress towards reintegration. This work is bearing fruit only now in a few municipalities where minority returnee children have been able to attend local schools without having to be taught according to the curriculum of another ethnicity.

As part of the process of increasing the pressure on housing officials and mayors to stop obstructing the property law implementation process, and in order to accelerate the issuance of decisions and the execution of evictions, the OSCE encouraged the investigation and prosecution of obvious cases of obstruction under the criminal code. Offences included abuse of office, lack of commitment, prevention of return, and devastation of property.

Well-functioning national human rights protection mechanisms in BiH are a cornerstone for national reconciliation and conflict prevention. Accordingly, the Human Rights Department worked closely with all BiH human rights institutions, providing operational support, assistance in developing sustainable case law, and political intervention with a view to the implementation

of decisions and reports. Currently, the Mission is developing strategies for transfer of the responsibility for the continued operation of the institutions to the national authorities in BiH.

Democratization. Over the past year, the Democratization Department was a leading force in building democratic political, governmental, legal and social values, practices and structures through an integrated approach focusing on four main sectors: civil society, political parties, women in politics and governance. These programme areas are not only complementary in addressing the different levels of BiH society, but are also interdependent in their efforts to introduce sustainable democratic development.

The Civil Society Programme aims at developing a sustainable civil society by increasing the participation of civil society actors in the policy- and decision-making processes. Approximately 75 civic organizations received coalition, partnership-building, and public advocacy skills training to strengthen the sustainability and internal democratic structures of NGOs.

The Community Facilitation Programme organized more than 100 public events to foster the dialogue between citizen's groups and local authorities, institutions and political parties, with a view to increasing civic influence and participation in the decision-making process.

The Democracy Centre Network concentrated on awareness-raising on issues such as privatization, return and elections. As part of the OSCE exit strategy, training was given in strategic planning and organizational and governance skills.

The overall goal of the Political Party Development (PPD) Programme was to provide voters with a moderate political alternative in the upcoming elections. PPD worked on establishing and consolidating the presence of moderate political parties by facilitating outreach activities in western Herzegovina and in the Republika Srpska, via the PPD's network of political resource centres. In the months preceding the general elections, campaign-related activities (political tribunes, election cafés, media access) specifically tailored to the regional differences were implemented.

The PPD Programme continued to work with political foundations in strengthening liberal and social-democratic alternatives through coalition-building. Youth parliaments and related activities succeeded in mobilizing young people to develop and advocate their own political agenda.

In the first half of 2000, the Women in Politics Programme focused on the political empowerment of 3,000 women to run for office in the municipal elections in April. Mainly due to the efforts of this Women-Can-Do-It Programme, women in BiH made history, accounting for 18 per cent of the candidates elected – three times as many as in the last elections, and higher than in any local election ever in BiH. A database of elected women was created, and a Task Force on Women in Local Governance was set up, with regional chapters throughout BiH.

For the general elections in November 2000, an information campaign was conducted to encourage women voters to choose and vote actively, and candidates received training in media and political skills. Work with women in the Parliament and parliamentary gender equality committees continued. The Stability Pact Gender Task Force Clearinghouse Office, a gathering point for information on gender initiatives in South-Eastern Europe, was established in Sarajevo and is administered by the OSCE.

In 2000, the Municipal Infrastructure Finance (MIFI) Programme was enhanced by the introduction of 13 new municipalities, and there was increased emphasis on transparency, co-operation between the executive and legislative branches, and incorporation and institutionalization of civic participation in political processes. The Department also co-operated with a national support unit in developing and installing financial management software in two municipalities, with the larger goal of reducing corruption.

The Governance Programme for Training Newly Elected Councillors conducted workshops for officials from 50 Bosnian municipalities during the period from May to September 2000. The Programme focused on the roles and responsibilities of newly elected officials and financial management decision-makers.

Regional stabilization. The Regional Stabilization Department continued to fulfil the operational tasks, instructions and guidelines laid down by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and by the Vienna (Article II) and Florence (Article IV) Agreements. The Department promoted confidence- and security-building in the pursuit of co-operative security in BiH. In 2000, the efforts of the Department focused on the improvement of democratic parliamentary control of the Entity Armed Forces, on defence budget reductions and transparency, including foreign military assistance, and on the continuation of the regular information exchange and inspection regime. The main effort is now shifting to the restructuring of the Entity Armed Forces, and the improvement of the command and control organization at the State level.

In 1999, an initial 15 per cent reduction in the Entity Armed Forces created a baseline from which to judge this year's further 15 per cent reduction. It is the Mission's understanding that the further reduction will be completed in both Entities by the end of 2000. Working group meetings, as well as a seminar on defence budgets, took place in June, and the Mission initiated an audit of the defence budgets of both entities, which took place in September.

During the year, the Mission facilitated Article II and IV inspections in BiH, as well as visits to military bases. The Mission also continued to participate in the analysis of military information exchanges and notifications between the parties in order to monitor and report on compliance with the Article II and IV Agreements. In order to improve the democratic control of the armed forces, the Regional Stabilization Department conducted a series of code-of-conduct seminars for brigade and battalion commanders. The Mission also organized a seminar in Slovenia with the participation of high-ranking parliamentarians and military leaders from both entities.

Media affairs. In 2000, the Department of Media Affairs concentrated its activities on media professionalism, media developments and media laws and standards.

In the field of media professionalism, the Department established the Free Media Help Line in November 1999 with the aim of fostering the protection of journalists' rights and promoting freedom of expression. The Help Line was not only a means for registering and monitoring reported incidents, but also provided direct assistance to journalists and helped the Department to monitor the overall status of journalists' rights in BiH.

The Department also developed police guidelines for dealing with the media and journalists' guidelines for dealing with the police. This initiative aims to promote a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the police and the media in BiH and to enhance the professional relationship between them. The combined police/journalist guidelines

inform the police about the rights and treatment of journalists and inform journalists about their responsibilities in dealing with the police.

As far as media development was concerned, the Mission supported several radio stations that are members of the first independent radio network in BiH, and enabled them to run inter-entity joint programming in a highly professional manner. Two years after the start of the project, it is obvious that a significant number of media outlets have not only developed an independent and professional programming and editorial policy, but have also successfully improved their prospects for long-term viability.

At the time of writing, an election-period media-monitoring project (daily media digest) is being operated under full OSCE administration. This monitoring project is designed to improve understanding of the country's political, media and social trends among the members of the international community in BiH.

In the field of media laws and standards, the Mission, in co-operation with OHR, launched a media law initiative and established an advisory group on defamation and freedom-of-information legislation. This advisory group developed and reviewed a draft freedom-of-information law for the State and entity levels. The draft legislation was released to the public on 28 June 2000 and was followed by a series of public-information and consultative meetings involving members of the media, NGOs, civic groups, legal practitioners and members of the local government and is currently under review by parliamentary bodies.

Press and public information. In the period under review, the Press and Public Information Department continued performing its primary duty of enhancing and maintaining the Mission's public profile.

The Public Information Office was engaged in an extensive public information campaign on the election law until early February, when the BiH Parliament rejected the draft election law and the Department shifted its focus to two more rounds of OSCE-organized elections. Throughout the period preceding the municipal elections, the Press Office sought to make the election process as transparent as possible. With this in mind, the Public Information Office created a number of elections-related fact sheets that provided an overview of the election process. On election day, the Press Office opened four press centres across the country and remained in close contact with the local media until the final election results were available. To better reach young voters, the Public Information Office produced eight youth-oriented TV spots that featured local talent. These spots complemented the work of the Election Information and Civic Education Branch in the Elections Department.

After the municipal elections were over, the Department turned its attention to the upcoming general elections, scheduled for November 2000. In June, the Public Information Office began preparations for a campaign against corruption that would encourage voters to use their ballot to vote against corruption and those parties and individuals allowing it to continue and thrive. The campaign featured a manual on OSCE best practices, a brochure, a fact sheet, radio and TV spots, matchboxes and billboards.

In tandem with the campaign against corruption, and in the run-up to the general elections, the Press and Public Information Department undertook another campaign to ensure a transparent electoral process. The campaign again featured fact sheets and an extensive web package. On the day of the elections, press centres will be opened around the country. An innovation introduced in this campaign was an election quiz aired on three major BiH TV networks. The show was educational and targeted young voters, encouraging them to vote on

11 November. As always, the Press Office worked with the local and international media to promote accurate and timely coverage of the elections.

1.3 OSCE Mission to Croatia

The OSCE Mission to Croatia, established in 1996, currently has 175 international members serving at the headquarters in Zagreb, three co-ordination centres in Vukovar, Knin and Sisak, and 14 field offices. In the reporting period, the Mission continued to act in the fields of human rights and minority rights, democratization, return, the media and police monitoring, as stipulated in its mandate. Taking into account the new political environment after parliamentary and presidential elections in early 2000, Permanent Council Decision No. 345 (23 March 2000) set a ceiling of 225 international Mission members, allowing for the possibility of subsequent adjustment as appropriate, in order to reflect developments in Croatia.

In pursuing its enhanced mandate the Mission was mainly active in the past year in the process of return of refugees and displaced persons, the strengthening and promoting of civil society and involvement in regional activities of the OSCE and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Elections. The elections for the lower house of Parliament in Croatia were held by the end of January 2000. Following months of internal political debates and discussions with the international community, new electoral legislation was adopted in October 1999. Some recommendations of the international community were taken into account in the new legislation, for example, domestic election monitoring was allowed for the first time. International concerns remained regarding flawed citizenship legislation, reform of State television (HRT), minority representation, transparency in campaign financing, publication of voters' lists, etc.

The Mission provided full support and assistance to the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission, established in Croatia on 23 November 1999 to monitor parliamentary elections.

Elections to the lower house of parliament took place on 3 January 2000. Six major opposition parties united in two coalitions overwhelmingly defeated the governing Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). After the death of President Tudjman on 10 December 1999, extraordinary presidential elections were called on 24 January 2000, with a second round of voting on 7 February. The ODIHR election observation mission also observed both rounds of the presidential elections. In addition to its general support and assistance to the ODIHR, the Mission contributed 56 of its members as short-term election observers for the first round of presidential voting and with 64 members for the second round of presidential voting. The Mission also provided personnel to observe municipal elections in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in April 2000.

After the national elections, the Mission monitored preparations for extraordinary local elections in various parts of Croatia, including Zagreb, but did not become involved in the formal election-day observation. The Mission's elections-related activities continued to be conducted in full co-operation with the ODIHR.

Following the parliamentary and presidential elections and the formation of the new Government, the Mission increased its involvement in legislative reform issues, albeit with mixed success. In response to requests from key ministries, the Mission, together with other international partners, provided advice and assistance to authorities amending old laws and

drafting new ones. Although in most instances the draft laws introduced into parliament represented steps forward for Croatia in fulfilling its international commitments, changes introduced during the passage through parliament or during the implementation phase sometimes diluted these positive effects.

Democratization. In 2000, the Mission continued to work closely with the experts of the Council of Europe to help the new Government move Croatia towards achieving its goal of full compliance with the commitments undertaken on accession to the Council of Europe in 1996. Mission staff were in regular contact with the Council of Europe legal and human rights experts regarding such important areas of legal reform as media and telecommunications, local government and minority rights. In April 2000, the Head of Mission had a series of high-level meetings at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, culminating in a speech to the Expanded Rapporteur Group for Democratic Stability on 14 April.

To strengthen the rule of law at all levels, Mission experts have also participated as lecturers in seminars and workshops jointly sponsored by the Mission and the Council of Europe or the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR). These activities have focused primarily on improving the knowledge of lawyers, judges and law students about the European Convention on Human Rights. Mission experts also participated in a joint Council of Europe/EU/UNHCHR/OSCE Mission to Kosovo to assess of the human rights training needs of persons working for international organizations, as well as in an ODIHR/HCNM conference on minority representation in Warsaw.

Return. As in previous years, monitoring of the Croatian Government's implementation of its commitments related to the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons continued to be a major focus of the Mission's activities. The Mission noted the positive steps taken by the new Government to demonstrate its political will to fulfil its obligations and resolve outstanding return-related problems, not the least of which has been to improve the general atmosphere for return. The Mission also provided advice and assistance to the Government with regard to the amendment of two discriminatory laws that had previously had a negative effect on return. Following intensive consultations with the Mission and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on behalf of the international community, the Law on Reconstruction and the Law on Areas of Special State Concern were successfully amended. Implementation of these amendments is being carefully monitored by the Mission at the field level, especially since there continue to be elements in the local administration who impose obstacles to sustainable return.

A significant obstacle to the return of Croatian Serbs continued to be the legal regime on repossession of property, and other property issues, such as lost occupancy/tenancy rights. The Mission continued to raise these subjects with the Government while offering its assistance in changing current policies. The matter of occupancy/tenancy rights also has serious regional implications with regard to durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons, whether or not they choose to return to their pre-war homes.

According to the Government Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees (ODPR), up to 31 July 2000, almost 48,000 Croatian Serbs had returned to Croatia from other countries since the end of the conflict. Some 6,000 returned in convoys organized by UNHCR/ODPR convoys, and the remainder returned with confirmation on return but not with the organized convoys.

In April 2000, the Government established an inter-ministerial structure under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister to address return issues in the war-affected areas. The Mission provided expertise and advice to various levels of this new governmental structure, called the Co-ordination Body for Areas of Special State Concern.

The Mission continued to actively monitor the Government's commitment to cross-border return of persons between BiH and Croatia.

A number of co-ordination activities with other members of the international community are well established. In conjunction with the UNHCR, the Mission continued to co-chair three area return facilitation groups (in Knin, Sisak and Vukovar), which aim to enhance co-operation on return issues among international and other organizations at the local level. Held twice monthly, these meetings include cross-border international partners. Visits by the Article 11 Commission (a group of resident ambassadors, based on article 11 of the Erdut Agreement) to areas of concern to the international community were co-organized by the Mission and included trips to Benkovac (Knin area of return) in April and to Okucani (Sisak area of return) in June 2000. The visiting groups were accompanied by high-level government officials who were able to witness at first hand the problems on the ground, and governmental was subsequently initiated to redress them. Finally, high-level inter-agency meetings emphasized the importance of cross-border return. One such meeting was held in Sarajevo in May 2000, with the participation of the agency heads of the Office for the High Representative, the OSCE, and the UNHCR from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Police monitoring. To assist further integration of the Croatian Danube Region, the OSCE Police Monitoring Group (PMG), which was deployed in October 1998 after the withdrawal of the UN Police Support Group, monitored the performance of the ethnically mixed local police force and assisted in providing professional expertise to it.

Noting an improved overall climate of co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Mission reacted positively to improved local police performance in the war-affected areas in the wake of wide-ranging personnel and structural changes within the local police. As in central and southern Croatia, the security situation in the Danube Region is continuously reported as stable, and police performance as satisfactory. Therefore, the Permanent Council, on 21 September 2000, decided that the OSCE Police Monitoring Group would "...cease operations as a distinct unit within the OSCE Mission to Croatia by 31 October 2000" (PC.DEC/373). It further specified that the Mission would "...continue playing its civilian police monitoring and advisory role in the Danube region, as well as in other parts of Croatia". To this end the Mission was authorized to appoint experienced international civilian police officers and integrate them into the Mission. That resulted in an overall reduction of international Mission members in the OSCE Mission to Croatia at the end of 2000.

Elements of the Police Monitoring Group were re-deployed to monitor the performance of the local police at the first ever field investigation by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in Croatia regarding Serb victims, carried out in the Gospić area during April 2000. This reflected the good co-operation between the Mission and the ICTY.

As part of the tripartite meetings between the OSCE, the UN and the Council of Europe, the Mission lent its police monitoring and law enforcement experience to a target-oriented meeting on 24 February in Geneva, on international law enforcement and police monitoring. From 17 to 19 May, the Mission participated as an OSCE observer in the 29th Interpol Regional Conference on International Law Enforcement and Police Monitoring, held in Reykjavik, Iceland.

The Mission has been actively involved in developing concepts for enhancing co-operation in South-Eastern Europe to combat organized crime, initiated in the framework of the regional strategy of the OSCE and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. In March 2000,

the Mission participated in the first meeting of the Working Group on the Stability Pact Initiative against Organized Crime (SPOC) and also in three subsequent working meetings in the Hague, Brussels and Vienna.

The South-Eastern Europe Co-operation Initiative (SECI) Regional Centre for Combating Trans-Border Crime invited the Mission to participate in its training session from 6 to 10 March at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Budapest. The Mission made a presentation to SECI law enforcement personnel on policy initiatives and strategies related to the fight against trafficking in human beings. The Mission also participated in this year's second OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on 19 June in Vienna, devoted to establishing a division of labour between relevant organizations in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

The Mission organized a visit of the Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, which took place on 12 and 13 July. Subsequent contacts were developed between the Croatian National Co-ordinator for the Stability Pact and the OSCE/ODIHR.

Media. The performance of the State television (HRT) regarding delivery of a more neutral and unbiased style of reporting improved after the parliamentary elections. Changes among key personnel and efforts to transform HRT into a genuine public service broadcaster have led to the preparation of new draft legislation on HRT. The Mission facilitated contacts between the Council of Europe and the Croatian Government on this legislation and continued to call for further progress through the privatization of the third channel of HRT under fair and transparent conditions.

Following a successful year of funding democratization projects in 1999, the Mission continued to strengthen civil society with its funds for institution-building, as tangible proof of the international will to assist the transition process in Croatia. While elections and the media represented the immediate priority in the past year, the focus has subsequently shifted to democratic institution-building and NGO capacity-building. The Mission's activities thus aim at a broader spectrum, looking at activities that contribute to the functioning of Croatia's civil society over the longer run, in particular regarding training and assistance to local NGOs, local governance, institution-building, and civic education.

The Mission also continued to focus on inter-ethnic confidence building, conflict resolution, and return and reconciliation efforts, and sponsored activities of organizations for women and youth. In order to enhance these activities further, the Mission established contacts with the international donor community, since many worthwhile democratization projects cannot be financed by the Mission itself, because its funds for institution-building are limited. These projects have thus been entered into the Mission's recently established database, which was introduced to the Zagreb-based embassies and agencies in May 2000. In the context of fund-raising, the Mission's Democratization Unit also established working relations with interested delegations in Vienna and maintained a regular dialogue with such agencies as USAID, UNHCR, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) visited Croatia in November 1999 and May 2000, holding a series of meetings with key members of the new Government and with prominent members of the Serb community. The High Commissioner also had the opportunity to meet with the Director of Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe, who was in Zagreb from 22 to 24 May to consult with senior ministry officials about future co-

operation with the Council of Europe on legislative reform and training programmes. The HCNM visited Croatia also in September and discussed, *inter alia*, issues relating to the new minority rights legislation and the draft constitutional law on minority rights, which were about to be brought before the parliament.

At the invitation of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in January 2000, the Head of Mission informed the Working Group on the Western Balkans in Brussels (COWEB) about the Mission's priorities.

The Head of Mission and other senior members of the Mission had numerous meetings with high ranking representatives of international organizations and institutions on the occasion of their visits to Croatia. These included the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the former Yugoslavia, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Co-ordinator for the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1.4 OSCE Mission in Kosovo

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) was established by the OSCE Permanent Council on 1 July 1999 (PC.DEC/305). Since then, the Mission has taken the lead role in matters relating to human rights, the rule of law and institution- and democracy-building in the province. The Mission forms a distinct component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In order to fulfil its core mandate, the Mission has distributed its activities over five departments: Police Training and Education, Democratization, Human Rights and Rule of Law, Media Affairs and Elections.

OMIK currently has 649 international Mission members and about 1,900 local staff serving in the Mission headquarters in Priština, the five regional centres (Priština, Gnjilane, Pec, Mitrovica and Prizren) and the 19 field offices (staff figures as of 1 November 2000).

Over the past year, OMIK's priorities have been the protection and promotion of human rights, the establishment of the rule of law and the organization of the municipal elections which were held on 28 October 2000.

1.4.1 Departmental activities

Elections. On 28 October municipal elections, which had been organized by the OSCE, were held throughout Kosovo. The elections and registration process were boycotted by the Kosovo Serb minority so that effectively elections were only held in 27 of the 30 municipalities of Kosovo. Registered voters of 18 years and older voted in the elections on 28 October at the same location where they registered. Approximately 1500 polling stations were set up in 400 polling centres. Over 1500 international polling supervisors supervised the elections, which were held in remarkably peaceful circumstances. A group of observers led by the Council of Europe monitored the entire election process. The following is a summary of the registration and election preparations.

The registration of voters was organized by the Joint Registration Task Force (JRT), which was established in December 1999 by an exchange of letters between OMIK and the SRSG to pool UN and OSCE resources for the civil registration process. The JRT successfully completed, on 19 July, the first phase of civil registration, on the basis of which a final voters list

(FVL) was drawn up. The JRT collected approximately a million applications, primarily from Kosovo Albanians 16 years of age and older, both inside and outside of Kosovo.

In August, the Election Operations Division completed the design of the municipal ballot; all parties will be listed on the ballot but the voter will write in a number for the candidate chosen. Upon completion of the confirmation, additions and challenges (CAC) period, the OMIK launched a media campaign to educate voters about the forthcoming elections. The message of this campaign emphasized the importance of people's future participation in the political life of Kosovo. The Elections Public Information Division also began specifically targeting women and youth in co-operation with local NGOs by giving public presentations on elections. In addition, the OMIK launched a media campaign aimed at Serbian, Roma and Turkish minorities who had chosen not to participate in the October balloting.

The Central Election Commission (CEC), established on 18 April by UNMIK Regulation 2000/21, to be "responsible for the conduct of elections in Kosovo", adopted the rules governing the municipal elections. The chosen electoral system is open-list proportional representation, which allows small and minority parties to achieve representation with only a small share of the vote. The Commission adopted rules governing the conduct of political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives, and their supporters in order to create a climate of democratic tolerance. It fixed rules for media and campaign finance during the electoral period that will allow for an equitable competition and a substantive campaign. The CEC created an Election Complaints and Appeals Sub-Commission to address misconduct and violations of the electoral rules.

The CEC set up municipal election commissions and made provision for domestic observers, so as to fully involve the Kosovars in the management of the electoral process. The CEC adopted rules on the certification of political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives, and independent candidates and on the registration of candidates. It certified 19 political parties, two coalitions, three citizens' initiatives and 15 independent candidates. On 25 August, it adopted rules for polling and counting. The polling and counting rules specify the form of the ballot and set forth detailed procedures for assuring the security and secrecy of the ballot, the security of the polling centres and the prevention of voter fraud.

Democratization. The Democratization Department focused its activities on supporting and developing Kosovo's civil administration, political parties, and civil society, including local NGOs, with the overall aim of strengthening Kosovo's democratic values, structures and institutions.

The work of the Civil Administration Support (CAS) Division focused on strengthening local government structures. To support this goal, in December 1999, OMIK established an Institute for Civil Administration to provide training to municipal staff. Short and medium-term training is well underway. A range of senior municipal staff attended a programme of seminars in personnel management, principles of local democracy, human rights awareness, budget management and control and citizens' participation. The Institute also provided training to senior municipal staff in law, economics, public finance, personnel management, and conflict resolution. CAS had provided training to more than 1,300 municipal employees in seven regional locations by August 2000. The Division also provided consulting and technical assistance to the UN Civil Administration Pillar. In co-operation with the School of Public Administration in Slovenia, the Institute conducted a one-week workshop for 30 municipal leaders, in June 2000, in Ljubljana.

The Political Party Development (PPD) Division helped political parties to develop comprehensive and realistic political programmes. It did this through seminars on public and

media relations, political party organization and platform-development, and election campaign training for about 250 campaign managers and candidates, as well as about 250 party spokespersons and press officers. A network of political party service centres (PPSCs) provided the logistical basis for Kosovo-wide training programmes and helped to promote a fair and secure environment in which political parties could mobilize their supporters. Funding was secured for training of women candidates; two women candidates from each political party were invited to attend ten workshops throughout the province in September 2000.

The elections have posed a particular challenge to PPD. The scale and complexity of election preparations led to the establishment, in April 2000, of the Political Party Consultative Forum (PPCF), an informal gathering of political parties and coalitions to be consulted on the decisions made by the Central Election Commission (CEC). OMIK was urging political parties to focus on concrete, community-based issues for the municipal elections, something recognized as lacking in almost all the political party programmes.

OMIK also supported the development of non-political structures, such as citizens' groups and local NGOs, and served as a focal point for the donor community. The Mission has established a network of NGO resource centres throughout Kosovo to give access to office space and provide training programmes. OMIK prepared a draft constitution for the establishment of the Council of Local NGOs in Kosovo and, *inter alia*, facilitated its first general meeting on 11 March 2000. As part of its human rights – and by extension, minority rights-mandate, OMIK has given specific attention to training minority communities and has facilitated the appointment of a Roma representative to the Kosovo Transitional Council (KTC).

Human rights. Human-rights and rule-of-law officers were deployed in all five UNMIK regions. These officers worked closely with a variety of international partners, including the UNHCR, the IOM, KFOR, the UNMIK Police, and the UN Municipal Administration. They reported on human rights violations and assisted in building local capacity to monitor, report on and advocate the observance of human rights in Kosovo. One particular area of concern remains the human rights situation of Kosovo's minority communities. The Human Rights Division increased the focus on the part of its mandate relating to capacity-building and training, running a range of programmes in areas such as human-rights education, NGO human-rights programming, and womens' participation in society. Human-rights officers were also active in improving access to education for minority children, particularly those from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. OMIK has highlighted this, *inter alia*, through joint assessment reports with the UNHCR, five of which have so far been published.

In addition, the Division monitored the legal system and the responses of the relevant police services and security forces. Specially trained legal systems monitors covered court proceedings from the point of arrest, through pre-trial hearings, to indictment and trial. The Human Rights Division has also been focusing on monitoring human rights violations of civil and political rights, with special emphasis on the election campaign in the run-up to the municipal elections in October. Monitoring has also identified other critical areas, including trafficking in human beings. In this area, the Division played a key role in victim protection and assistance by identifying systemic problems through its regular reporting, and participated in legislative review. Another critical area was residential property rights, where the mix of past and present discrimination has left a particularly difficult situation.

Rule of law. The Rule of Law Division provided logistical and material support to the courts. The Kosovo Judicial Institute, to be fully operational by the end of 2000, is responsible for the training and education of judges and prosecutors. In the interim, the Institute organized workshops, seminars and information sessions for judges, prosecutors and defence counsel in a

number of areas, including investigation proceedings, the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the judiciary and human rights standards. Further training in juvenile issues and international humanitarian law is planned throughout 2000.

OMIK's Ombudsperson Support Section established the legal basis for the establishment of the Ombudsperson Institution. OMIK nominated an Ombudsperson, who was formally appointed by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) in August. The institution became fully functional in September 2000. OMIK is conducting a public awareness campaign, in co-operation with the Council of Europe, and training sessions on issues related to the Ombudsperson institution.

OMIK established the Kosovo Law Centre (KLC) in June 2000 as an independent NGO to support the legal community. The KLC has conducted seminars on a broad range of issues and has prepared two compilations of applicable law in English, Albanian and Serbian. A third compilation is currently being prepared. The KLC actively provided materials and technical assistance to the law faculty of Priština University, on subjects which included the modernization of the curriculum and development of student exchange programmes with European universities.

As part of its assistance programme, OMIK assisted the Kosovo Bar Association in April 2000 in holding its first general assembly since 1989, resulting in the re-establishment of its activities. Since then, it has provided the Kosovo Bar Association with technical and logistical support for modernizing the Statutes of the Association and the Code of Ethics for attorneys, and has provided logistical assistance, in the form of transport, to defence counsel for members of minorities.

OMIK has made a significant contribution to the revision of the Kosovo draft criminal code and the Kosovo draft criminal procedure code by presenting four drafts of legislation for the consideration of the Joint Advisory Council on Legislative Matters (JAC). Areas in which OMIK has had a particular input are juvenile justice, sexual criminal acts, criminal acts against people's health (specifically, drug offences) and criminal acts against the economy.

Media affairs. This year, OMIK renewed the contract with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to manage and run Radio-Television Kosovo (RTK) as a public service broadcaster. RTK remained exclusively publicly funded. During most of the year, it broadcast a daily two-hour television programme by satellite, in Albanian and Serbian. During the elections and following the rebuilding of the terrestrial transmission network, the broadcasts are to be increased to three or four hours.

In accordance with its mandate aiming at the development of professional and independent media, the Media Affairs Department organized a number of important training programmes for approximately 500 Kosovar journalists in both Albanian and Serbian. The Department also laid all the necessary groundwork for continuing these intensive training activities in 2001.

The development of media for Kosovo's minority communities is one of OMIK's priorities. The Department instituted and carried out several projects to help minorities develop their own media and distributed independent newspapers from Serbia itself to the Serb community in Kosovo. The Division of Independent Media Support allocated grants to various media projects to respond to the requirement for information among all segments of the population.

OMIK prepared media regulations, covering subjects including the issuance of licenses and allocation of broadcasting frequencies. On the advice of OMIK, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General issued Regulation 2000/36 on the licensing and regulation of the broadcast media in Kosovo and Regulation 2000/37 on the conduct of the print media in Kosovo. Regulation 2000/36 formally establishes the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) and authorizes the TMC to take action against media found in violation of the regulations or the associated codes of conduct for broadcast and print media. RTK was established as a public-service broadcaster for Kosovo and set up an Interim Media Commission (IMC), which will succeed the TMC and regulate the media through the development of media laws and standards, management of the frequency spectrum, establishment of broadcast and press codes of conduct and the monitoring of compliance.

In order to regularize the allocation of frequencies, the Department reviewed applications from radio stations for local frequencies, issued local licenses and allocated frequencies to the successful applicants. Province-wide licenses for broadcasters were issued through a separate, transparent process.

Police education and development. A total of seven basic recruit courses have taken place, and approximately 1,700 Kosovo Police Service officers have graduated from the Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS) and have been deployed to the five regions of Kosovo. Proceeding with overlapping classes at the rate of 300 new recruits every five weeks, the goal of 4,000 trained officers will be met by May-June 2001. On an average, the trained groups are comprised of 16 per cent women and 13 per cent minority representatives.

After the basic course, the candidates undergo a minimum of 19 weeks of field training by specially trained UNMIK field training officers (FTOs). OMIK has trained more than 2,100 UNMIK police officers as FTOs. The first basic supervisor's course began in July 2000 with the aim of creating a potential future management cadre for the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). It is expected that 193 supervisors will have completed this course by December 2000. Regional training centres have been established in Pec, Gnjilane, and Prizren to support the KPS School's advanced and in-service training programmes. A total of around 175 KPS officers are trained in these locations each week. The School expects that, in collaboration with the UN Department of Judicial Affairs, by December 2000, a total of 499 correctional officers will have been trained and deployed to Kosovo's prisons and correctional centres.

Administrative Department for Democratic Governance and Civil Society. OMIK assumed responsibility for the co-leadership of one of the 20 administrative departments created under the Agreement on the Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS) of December 1999. The Department for Democratic Governance and Civil Society (DDGCS) was formally established in July 2000.

The DDGCS consists of five units, which work to monitor the developing governance structures and to detect and redress developments that would adversely affect the establishment of a modern, transparent and accountable governing system. The Human Rights Bureau, the Equal Opportunity Bureau and the Democratic Governance Bureau actively advise the JIAS in order to ensure human rights compliance with all legislative and policy-making acts. All three Bureaus strive to encourage citizens to participate actively, exercise their democratic rights and stand up for their legitimate interests. The NGO Support Section supports local NGOs in the creation of an environment that is favourable to an active civil society, while the Independent Media Office supports independent media and public broadcasters.

The Department has established itself as an adviser in the legislation processes (Regulation on Self-Government of Municipalities, the Labour Law, Regulation on the Non-Resident Affairs Department, Trafficking Regulation). It has also made recommendations on the applications of political parties for registration. The DDGCS is now concentrating on proactive work to ensure transparency within the JIAS and to guarantee access to employment for all groups and access to services within the Interim Administration.

1.5 OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

The reporting period was marked by the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis and the return of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje to its primary function of monitoring events in the region that may have spillover effects for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The mandate of the Mission has remained unaltered since its inception in 1992 and is currently carried out by eight international staff supported by six locally employed team members. Rapid and far-reaching changes within the host country have been reflected in a considerable widening of the Mission's activities in order to facilitate further progress and enhance stability.

There has been further stabilization of the political situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia since the election of a new President and commencement of negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union. Wholesale changes in the laws affecting all areas of government administration and society (economic, social and penal) and the judiciary itself have been embarked upon. The effects on the country both of its own municipal elections on 10 and 24 September and of the elections in neighbouring Kosovo are of particular interest. Some concerns remain regarding the possibility of a polarization of minority groups as a result. The Mission played a key role in supporting the ODIHR in the monitoring of these elections.

The Mission actively provided briefings to and co-operated with a whole range of organizations, including the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), the NATO contingents (including area project assessment co-operation), the European Commission, CARITAS and *Interkerkelig Vreedensberad*, as well as Macedonian Government ministries and bilateral embassies.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Mission has been working closely with the Council of Europe toward the improvement of trans-border relations and of the situation of the Roma minority in the country, the latter involving also close co-operation with the UNHCR. The Mission's close working relationship with all ministries, which was a key element in the successful resolution of potential problems in the recent past, has continued to develop in a mutually beneficial manner. Together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Mission has been developing and implementing training programmes for journalists in order to contribute to responsible free media in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A joint venture in media democratization is envisaged together with the European Commission.

Many and diverse small projects, including the development of a regional student organization involving seven nations, were implemented with the direct support of national embassies represented in the country (Austria, Canada, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland). Furthermore, the development of local self-government has been enhanced by projects in co-operation with the state government of Bavaria, Germany, and the Norwegian Government. A team of mayors has been formed to provide a core of expert advice to the

Ministry, where a Mission member is acting as adviser on the continuing development of the initiative as a regional template.

Several projects were carried out at the grass-roots level, relating for example, to minority empowerment, a Roma youth conference and the production of a Roma film. In order to promote inter-municipal dialogue, the Mission has been working on a cross-border project which has now resulted in the establishment of a tourist accommodation scheme and the development of a shared chamber of commerce between the towns of Debar and Peshkopi.

Projects for training and development of the Macedonian police have been prepared together with the ODIHR and the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute (COLPI/SOROS Foundation). The Mission is also providing advice and support to the Ministry of the Interior concerning parallel projects and it is hoped that the police training academy will be able to make a fresh start, producing officers properly equipped to deal with the problems of modern policing.

Legal reform has taken a prominent place in development in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Mission has been working in co-operation with the ODIHR on initiatives to address issues such as domestic violence and the development of programmes to combat trafficking and to enhance the status and rights of women, and has also been fostering co-operative relations between national women's groups and the international community. The Mission acts as the co-ordinating organization for such activities and has been keen to develop its involvement as a facilitating focal point for the enhancement of local strategies. The appointment of a co-ordinator of the task force on trafficking under the Stability Pact is seen as a major step in addressing the problem.

The Mission has also been focusing on economic development in the country and has worked on further development of the relations between the Mission and donor organizations in order to identify small business projects as building blocks for regional co-operative development (Prespa Lake, Ohrid, etc). The Mission maintains relationships with the European Commission and different national development and funding organizations in order to provide a channel for information and a focal point for local business development. Notwithstanding the main thrust of the Mission's commitment in facilitating economic development, grass-roots opportunities have not been forgotten, and the Mission has identified and brought to donors' attention village-level development needs.

1.6 OSCE Mission to Estonia

During 2000, the OSCE Mission to Estonia continued to monitor the Estonian Government's legislation, policies and practices relevant to the promotion of dialogue and understanding between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities. In particular, this entailed strengthening co-operation with the Government and other State institutions, including key ministries and parliamentary commissions, as well as with representatives from the non-governmental sector.

In this past year, the Mission focused, *inter alia*, on monitoring legislation affecting citizenship and residency, language use and education. The Mission considered a number of questions related to the issuing of temporary and permanent residence permits, especially in cases of family reunification and the conversion of temporary residence permits into permanent ones. Moreover, the Mission continued to monitor the naturalization process. It was also active in monitoring legislation governing knowledge of the State language in both the public and the private sectors, in election processes and in the education sector.

The Mission has continuously followed and supported the Estonian Government's integration strategy, which has been applied since the autumn of 1997. A significant development in this area was the Estonian Government's adoption of a State Integration Programme on 14 March 2000. The State Integration Programme outlines a strategy for integration among the communities in the country from 2000 to 2007 and will serve as an action plan for social integration by government institutions, county governments, local governments, institutions and organizations. Based on the principles of two earlier documents: The Bases of the State Integration Policy (adopted by the *Riigikogu* on 10 June 1998) and the Government Action Plan (adopted by the former Government on 10 February 1998), the Programme has three main objectives. The first stated aim is linguistic-communicative integration, or the recreation of a "common sphere of communication and the daily reproduction of an Estonian language environment in Estonian society under the conditions of cultural diversity and tolerance." The second aim is legal and political integration, defined as the formation of a population loyal to the Estonian State and a reduction in the number of residents without Estonian citizenship. The third aim is the creation of socio-economic integration, which is referred to as increased competitiveness and social mobility of every member of Estonian society.

The Mission has continued its efforts to support the integration process through a number of concrete projects being conducted in conjunction with non-governmental organizations, and national as well as international organizations and foreign donors. With financial support from the ODIHR, the Mission has supported the establishment by a non-governmental human rights organization of a regional office in the north-eastern part of Estonia that will assist persons with questions relating to residency and citizenship. ODIHR funds are also allowing the Mission to support the activities of other non-governmental organizations, for example, the production of a video film and a book on multiculturalism intended as teaching materials in schools and a centre for non-governmental organizations in north-eastern Estonia. Finally, the Mission is also supporting human rights education through the production of an Estonian-language version of a human rights text and through lectures by Mission members at different educational institutions.

The Mission has been paying particular attention to the development of the educational system as a main factor of integration. In this context, together with the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Mission recently hosted a seminar in the city of Narva on integration through education.

The Mission has encouraged the creation of non-governmental organizations and has supported their work by assisting them in obtaining and exchanging information in order to create awareness of the practical potential of NGOs in civil society.

The Mission plans to co-host an Estonian media seminar for representatives of the two language media in the country. This will provide opportunities for both Estonian- and Russian-speaking journalists to discuss common professional issues and, more specifically, the media code of conduct. It is expected that this project will, therefore, help to strengthen civil society in Estonia.

In all of its activities, the Mission has continued to support the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the ODIHR in Estonia. In particular, the Mission monitored and reported extensively on the implementation of the High Commissioner's recommendations on amendments to the Estonian Law on Language which were adopted in June 2000.

Through its main office in Tallinn and regional offices in Narva and Jõhvi in north-eastern Estonia, the Mission has continued to monitor the social and economic situation in the country, particularly for Russian-speakers, and especially in north-eastern Estonia, which is predominantly inhabited by Russian-speakers.

1.7 OSCE Mission to Latvia

The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Latvia relates primarily to citizenship issues and related matters. It stipulates that the Mission should be at the disposal of the Latvian Government and authorities to give advice on such issues and should provide information and advice to institutions, organizations and individuals with an interest in a dialogue on these questions. In implementing its mandate, the Mission should gather information and report on developments relevant to the full realization of OSCE principles, norms and commitments. The Mission is currently staffed with a Head of Mission and four other international members, whose work is supported by five local employees.

After the adoption of the Citizenship Law in 1998, the number of applications for naturalization submitted increased considerably. However, since the beginning of 2000, there has been an increasing interest in naturalization compared to the same period in 1999. In 1999, queues of applicants occurred, especially in the capital Riga. However, additional funding enabled the competent institution – the Naturalization Board – to efficiently process the increased number of applicants and prevented queues from recurring. Currently, the naturalization process takes six to seven months in Riga and five months in other parts of the country.

During the past year, the Mission closely followed developments in relation to the law regulating the issuance of non-citizen passports. The non-citizen passport serves a double function, both as an identification document within the country and as a travel document. Those eligible for the document had to exchange their old Soviet passports by 31 March 2000, when these ceased to be valid in Latvia. It is estimated that, currently, approximately 26,000 people are without a valid identification document, since they have yet to apply for the non-citizen passport. The number of non-citizens is now decreasing by 12,000 to 15,000 annually as a result of naturalization. As of August 2000, 38,000 persons had been naturalized, whereas 561,000 persons held the non-citizen passports.

On 1 October 1999, the issuance of identification documents for stateless persons began. Residents of Latvia who lost or gave up their former citizenship (other than Soviet) will be entitled to the new document. The Department for Citizenship and Migration Affairs (DCMA) estimates that a total of between 100 and 200 residents will obtain the passports in the future. In one year, about 60 persons had obtained them.

The Mission has continued to help resolve cases that have been brought to its attention in connection with all the above-mentioned issues. It is encouraging to note that the number of persons facing difficulties with their legal status seems to have decreased substantially in recent years.

In December 1999, the revised State Language Law was adopted by the Parliament. The High Commissioner on National Minorities stated that the law is "essentially in conformity with Latvia's international obligations and commitments". During the spring and summer months of 2000, a team made up of experts from the HCNM Office and the Council of Europe, and

independent experts, communicated with the relevant Latvian authorities with a view to ensuring the draft Language Law regulations should be brought into compliance with the letter and the spirit of the Law. On 22 August, the Latvian Government approved the regulations in a form that brought them essentially into conformity with both the Law and Latvia's international commitments. The HCNM noted that "... virtually all of my recommendations were accepted by the Government in the drafting process".

The Mission has continued to monitor developments in relation to the drafting of the State integration programme. In spite of the commitment and hard work of the management group drafting the programme, its final completion has been delayed for various reasons. A short version of it was adopted by the Government in May 2000, and it is hoped that the longer version – which contains concrete integration projects – will be approved in due course, once it is submitted to the Government.

Over the past year, the Mission has also undertaken a number of projects relating to integration and human dimension activities. Two books have been published with the assistance of the Mission. One constitutes guidelines for civil servants on the conduct of good public administration, and the other is the first textbook in Latvian on human rights. Furthermore, six regional NGO projects and one seminar have been undertaken to enhance the discussion on regional integration initiatives outside the capital.

The Head of Mission, in his capacity as the OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners, continued to work with the Latvian and Russian authorities in the Joint Commission, which handles problems connected with the retired Russian military pensioners who stayed on in Latvia after the Russian troops were withdrawn in 1994.

1.8 OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus

In the period under review, the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus (AMG), established in 1997, continued, in accordance with its mandate, to "assist the Belarusian authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments; and [to] monitor and report on this process" (PC.DEC/185). The Group continued its work of pursuing dialogue with the Government, the opposition and other parts of Belarusian society; offering advice on different issues, including in particular issues related to the electoral process and the electoral code; monitoring a large number of court cases; and initiating implementation of several projects promoting, *inter alia*, democracy-building.

Strong support for the co-operation of the AMG with the Belarusian Government, the opposition political parties and non-governmental organizations was expressed by the Heads of State or Government of OSCE participating States at the Istanbul Summit in November 1999. In the light of the initiation, under the aegis of the OSCE, of negotiations between the Government and the opposition, the Istanbul Declaration welcomed the early progress in this respect and stressed "the necessity of removing all remaining obstacles to this dialogue by respecting the principles of the rule of law and the freedom of the media". The Advisory and Monitoring Group, according to opinion polls, is well known in political circles in the country and enjoys high prestige.

The concept of a peaceful solution to the conflictual situation achieved through dialogue, negotiations, and eventually free and fair elections long appeared unacceptable to both sides. However, after the OSCE Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the Government of Belarus abandoned its agreement with the opposition for negotiations between the two sides under the

aegis of the AMG. It disavowed an initial written agreement concluded between the Government and the opposition on the early and regulated access of the opposition political parties to the State-controlled electronic mass media.

By the end of 1999, it had become evident that the President of Belarus had decided to seize full control of the dialogue and to eliminate both the concept of direct negotiations with the opposition, i.e., organized in the Advisory Council, and the mediating or facilitating function of the AMG in the preparations for the parliamentary elections in 2000 and the presidential elections in 2001.

In February 2000, President Lukashenko distanced himself further from the concept of meaningful dialogue on an 'even level' with the opposition when he initiated a public political dialogue with all political parties, non-governmental organizations and trade unions, reserving the right, however, to choose which of the recommendations developed in the course of the public political dialogue were to be adopted. Under such conditions, the opposition parties rejected participation.

Furthermore, on the occasion of the three technical conferences of the European institutions (European Union, Council of Europe, OSCE), attended also by the US-based International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and eventually by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), held in April, June and August 2000, the dispatch of international observers to the upcoming parliamentary elections in October 2000 was made contingent upon progress in four essential fields: First, transparency of the electoral process and of the electoral code; second, regular access of the opposition political parties to the State-controlled electronic mass media; third, the establishment of meaningful functions for the parliament to be elected; and fourth, confidence-building measures, in particular cessation of suppression of political opponents.

On the occasion of the third technical conference on 30 August 2000, a recommendation of the European institutions was adopted. The continuation of the valuable and important participation of the European institutions (OSCE, Council of Europe and European Union) in the democratization process of Belarus was deemed necessary. Due to insufficient progress in the four major fields identified as critical, the conference recommended only the dispatch of a technical assessment mission from the ODIHR, but invited the Parliamentary Troika (the European Parliament, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and of the OSCE) to be present during the elections. Their presence, and that of the ODIHR, in Minsk during the elections does not constitute an act of recognition of the democratic character of the ruling Government. The four criteria established will continue to serve as benchmarks for a review of the relations between the European institutions and Belarus. They will be reviewed in the light of the actual implementation of the elections and the functions of the new parliament, which will be amended according to the commitments undertaken by the President on 11 August and 28 October 2000.

In co-operation with the Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus, the Parliamentary Troika of the European Parliament, and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and of the OSCE visited Minsk several times during the year and had direct talks with President Lukashenko and his officials, as well as with the opposition, promoting the establishment of a meaningful dialogue between the two sides. The same message was delivered by the Governmental Troika of the OSCE (Austria, Norway and Romania), in May 2000.

On the domestic stage the Advisory and Monitoring Group assisted six Non-Governmental Organizations (Republican Association of Voters, Belarus Helsinki Committee,

Sapiega, Free Trade Union, Movement for Free and Democratic Elections, Women's Association) in the establishment of an independent and countrywide election observation network. More than 5,000 volunteers were trained as observers, and a reporting system was established.

On 2 July 2000 the Council of Democratic Forces in Belarus adopted a recommendation to boycott the election, because of the absence of fair conditions and the lack of meaningful functions of the parliament to be elected. However, mostly on an individual basis, dozen of politicians and other well-known personalities sought registration as candidates, but were rejected on formalistic grounds.

In response to letters addressed in July and August 2000 to the President of Belarus by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner, and by the High Representative of the European Union for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Solana, President Lukashenko announced a number of measures on 11 August, which slightly improved the framework conditions for the elections.

The Belarusian Government, seeking the participation of observers from the European institutions, took action, *inter alia*, on the Electoral Code, with regard to confidence-building measures, and through the invitation of individual opposition politicians to air their views on State television and radio, as well as in the State-run print media. Eventually, the President undertook to include representatives of the political parties in the Central Electoral Commission as non-voting members, to enhance – after the elections – the functions of the parliament to be elected. Moreover, criminal court proceedings against several well-known opposition figures have not been used to prevent their registration as candidates for the parliamentary elections. On the other hand, the activities of opposition parties, independent newspapers and democratically oriented non-governmental organizations, including human rights associations, continue to be obstructed.

Mass demonstrations were relegated to suburban squares or prohibited, and massive use of militia forces occurred during the events on 25 March 2000. The AMG monitored the suppressive and discriminatory activities of the Government and – on many occasions – raised such violations and administrative measures with the authorities.

On Election Day, the observer network established – based on the official protocols issued at the precinct level – that not only the thirteen constituencies identified by the Central Electoral Commission had failed to reach the 50 percent threshold of registered voters, but that in addition more than 25 constituencies had also failed to do so. That means that the threshold was not reached in more than one third of the 110 constituencies of the parliament and it puts into question the quorum of the parliamentary body needed for its legal capacity to operate.

The nation-wide observation network worked full-scale in 70 constituencies and at random in the other districts. It also reported on violations that occurred in the whole election process starting with the establishment of the election commissions and leading up to Election Day as such.

The ODIHR Technical Assessment Mission stayed in Belarus from 18 September to 14 October 2000 and stated in its report that “these elections fell short of meeting the minimum commitments for free, fair, equal, accountable, and transparent elections. Despite some improvements since previous elections, the process remained flawed”. The Parliamentary Troika of representatives of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and of the OSCE noted the report of the Technical Assessment Mission and concluded

that “insufficient progress was achieved to satisfy the four criteria”. It regretted “that the Belarus authorities were, in the end, unable to use the window of opportunity offered by the organization of these parliamentary elections to make satisfactory progress”. The Parliamentary Troika “urged all true democratic forces to establish a common and credible strategy, which offers a real choice to the people of Belarus”. The Parliamentarians committed themselves to continue to offer their support, and the support of the institutions they represent, to the strengthening of the democratic process in Belarus, that will lead to the normalization of the country’s relations with the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE.

Following the two rounds of the parliamentary elections, the Central Election Commission confirmed the election of deputies in 97 of the 110 constituencies. New elections have to be announced within three months in 13 constituencies. The Electoral Commission rejected the criticism by the ODIHR Technical Assessment Mission and referred in response to the critical report of the Parliamentary Troika to a number of positive assessments of the election process by representatives from the Russian Federation, other CIS countries and from other countries.

Within the prospect of presidential elections in 2001, lessons have to be learned from the experiences gained during the recent parliamentary elections.

In 2000, the AMG provided advice to the members of the Advisory Council of the Opposition Parties with regard to the negotiations with the Government, the dialogue issues and the position of the European institutions on the conflict situation in Belarus. It facilitated the participation of the representatives of the 13th Supreme Soviet, as representatives of the internationally recognized democratically elected parliament of Belarus, in sessions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its organs. The AMG has also taken part in the Political Affairs Commission of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and in the hearings of the Council of the European Union on Belarus, which took place in Strasbourg and Brussels, respectively.

The AMG also initiated the implementation of a number of democracy-building projects financed by the European Union and the ODIHR. These projects relate to the establishment of a Centre for European and Transatlantic Studies at the European Humanities University in Minsk; establishment of a satellite-based information system at the University, including facilities for access to electronic scientific and academic libraries; implementation of a prison rehabilitation programme (elimination of tuberculosis, provision of health services and sanitary conditions, human rights education); organization of seminars on peaceful conflict resolution; lecture series on democratic institutions and youth; support for the development of political parties; and establishment of legal support for defendants in cases with suspected political implications.

In co-operation with the Council of Europe (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe) and a number of non-governmental organizations, and with neighbouring countries, the AMG conducted conferences in Minsk and in all the provincial capitals on local self-government, the rule of law and regional economic development. The conferences brought about dialogue – for the first time in years – between the administrative system in place and the opposition at the regional level.

As regards monitoring activities, the Legal Office of the AMG dealt with more than 700 cases. Court proceedings were attended; defendants were given advice; detained persons were visited in pre-trial detention, as were prisoners having been sentenced to prison terms; and support was given to families. In the event of suspected violations of Belarusian law and

international commitments of a legally binding nature, the issues were raised with the courts, the prosecutors and the Government.

In co-operation with a number of non-governmental organizations, such as the Belarus Helsinki Committee, and the Human Rights Centre, the AMG continued to organize courses for public defenders in Minsk and provincial towns. The AMG raised the issue of public defenders with the constitutional court and on two occasions obtained positive decisions. Because of the State-structured system of lawyers, the function of public defenders is of great importance to the defendant. The new Criminal Code and the Law on Criminal Court Proceedings no longer foresee a role for public defenders in criminal court proceedings. It is the firm opinion of the AMG that the institution of the public defender is of paramount importance under the conditions existing in Belarus. Also, family members without legal training can be registered as public defenders.

On several occasions during the year, the AMG addressed the State authorities and raised the issue of the level of discrimination to which the independent print media are exposed. For example, the independent print media have to pay higher fees for postal services. In contrast to the State-owned and State-run media, which receive high subsidies, the independent media are not subsidized and therefore have to charge higher prices for their product. Irregularities in the dispatch of the printed products to the newsstands have been recorded on many occasions. Because of rigid rules, their existence is constantly in peril. Two warnings are sufficient for a court to close down a newspaper. It was not possible to bring about improvements in the situation.

The principal goal to bring about free and democratic, internationally recognized parliamentary elections in 2000 was not accomplished. The elections did not meet the criteria established by the European institutions in accordance with the Copenhagen Document of June 1990. However, in the ongoing process of transformation to a truly democratic structure, some building blocks have been established. Research institutes specialized in opinion polls have reported a marked change of mind set within the population towards more democratic rule. This was reflected in the unexpectedly low level of participation in the parliamentary elections – namely hardly above 50 percent in contrast to the expected 60 to 70 percent of the registered voters. However, the opposition parties that had accomplished unity during the negotiation stage under OSCE aegis did not accomplish this unity in the parliamentary elections. Some boycotted the elections, others took part in the contest. With regard to the presidential elections in 2001, efforts are already under way to rally behind one candidate to challenge President Lukashenko.

The establishment of an independent countrywide election observation network constitutes an important achievement in the development of an active civil society defying even manifestations of intimidation. The countrywide system faced its first test on the occasion of the October elections for parliament. It will also be used on the occasion of the presidential elections in 2001 and in the event of elections for the Union-Parliament (Russian Federation/Republic of Belarus).

It should be noted that the deficiencies in the rule of law are felt time and again in the courts, notably in criminal and administrative trials and in the ongoing government control over mass media. These deficiencies continue to be part of particular concern to the Advisory and Monitoring Group and constitute a deplorable reality in the political life of contemporary Belarus.

1.9 OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya (Russian Federation)

In the period under review, the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya continued to operate from its temporary office in Moscow, where it has been located since the evacuation from Grozny. The Assistance Group was to return to Chechnya as soon as the basic requirements for such a return, including security requirements, were met. However, until the end of October 2000 the required conditions have failed to materialize and there has been no substantial improvement in the security environment, guarantees and arrangements allowing for redeployment of the Assistance Group from Moscow to Chechnya.

Since March 2000, the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship has been constantly endeavouring to establish the necessary conditions for a return of the Assistance Group to Chechnya. There are two basic prerequisites that have to be fulfilled. First, the Russian authorities should guarantee security and sufficient protection of the Assistance Group and its members. Second, the status of the Assistance Group must be clearly defined, especially as to immunity and security, in an agreement similar to those concluded with the Governments of all the countries where OSCE Missions are deployed. Unfortunately, two rounds of negotiations between the Political Director of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Walter Siegl, and the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Evgeny Gusarov, did not produce the basic elements for a technical agreement as to the status of the Assistance Group and its members.

These negotiations were preceded by great efforts by the Assistance Group to clear the way back to Chechnya. The Head of the Assistance Group, Ambassador Missong, conducted extensive negotiations with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the State Customs Committee, the State Duma and the Armed Forces General Staff in order to obtain agreements on technical and legal issues related to the future work of the Assistance Group in Chechnya.

On 11 and 12 March 2000, the Head of the Assistance Group was invited by the Government of the Russian Federation to visit Chechnya with a delegation of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. The itinerary of the trip included visits to Argun, Grozny and the detention camp in Chernokozovo, where, according to international and Russian media reports, prisoners were allegedly being mistreated. After returning to Moscow, the Head of the Assistance Group expressed the hope that the special fact-finding mission of the Assistance Group to Chechnya, as previously agreed upon with the competent Russian authority, could soon take place.

Indeed, from 21 to 23 March 2000, the Assistance Group was able to undertake a general assessment tour to Chechnya. Obviously, for security reasons, the Assistance Group members had no opportunity to move around freely and independently of Russian security guards. Almost all the information gathered was obtained from Russian military commanders and Chechen civilian authorities in Znamenskoye, Gudermes and Argun. A more objective picture could only be gained by closer contacts with a few local Chechens.

The impressions gained during this tour led the Assistance Group to the conclusion that an office could be established in the village of Znamenskoye in the Nadterechny district of Chechnya and field operations could be undertaken from there. An appropriate building for this office that could also accommodate the members of the Assistance Group was rented. However, actual work could not be started since, on 25 May 2000, the Russian Ministry of the Interior declared that it was not in a position to provide security for the Assistance Group anywhere in Chechnya.

On 26 September the Head of the Assistance Group met with General Kazantsev, the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Russian Federation President in the Southern Federal District. General Kazantsev said that although the general security situation in the Nadterchny district could be considered comparatively satisfactory, he would advise to refrain from the permanent deployment of the Assistance Group international staff in Znamenskoye, suggesting irregular stays there instead. On 2 October a meeting was held in Moscow between the Head of the Assistance Group, the OSCE Senior Security Co-ordinator and General Malinovsky, Head of the International Cooperation Department of the Russian Federation Ministry of the Interior, to discuss security measures to be implemented in Znamenskoye upon the deployment of the Assistance Group there. According to General Malinovsky, the security situation elsewhere in Chechnya continued to be bad. For this reason, he considered the modus operandi used by some international organizations and NGOs, i.e. operating from a Moscow office with “touch-and-go” visits to Chechnya, as wise and advisable. However, General Malinovsky pointed out that it was up to the OSCE to decide.

A team from the Assistance Group and the OSCE Secretariat travelled on 3-4 October to the Caucasus to visit the future office of the Assistance Group in Znamenskoye and to define necessary security measures that need to be implemented prior to the deployment of the members of the Assistance Group. Thanks to the support of the office of General Kazantsev, the OSCE team fulfilled all the tasks to its complete satisfaction. Following the 2 October meeting in the Ministry of the Interior and the trip to Chechnya, the Assistance Group through its local staff started the pre-deployment work in Znamenskoye, in particular the fortification of the compound. In parallel to the adaptation work, negotiations have been conducted with the Russian Federation authorities aimed at reaching agreement on the modalities of the future functioning of the Assistance Group in Znamenskoye and accelerating its deployment there.

On 26-27 October talks were held at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna with the Deputy Head of the International Cooperation Department of the Russian Federation Ministry of the Interior, Volkov. The Head of the Assistance Group participated in the talks. A number of provisions concerning security arrangements were agreed. However, some important issues remain to be solved, first of all with regard to the use of communication equipment, on which positions differ. The final agreement is expected to be reached in the near future. As soon as this happens, and the security guards are hired and deployed to Znamenskoye, the Assistance Group will be ready for the deployment of its international members to Znamenskoye.

Despite the circumstances, the Assistance Group, from its temporary location in Moscow, endeavoured to perform useful tasks in compliance with its mandate, which was reconfirmed without restrictions at the OSCE Istanbul Summit of Heads of State or Government in November 1999.

The Assistance Group largely focused its activities on the human dimension, in particular humanitarian assistance based on its own projects and the facilitation of such assistance rendered through voluntary contributions. Many of the projects focused on rehabilitation and assistance to Chechen children who had been internally displaced. Among the different projects, special mention should be made of the one on psycho-medical therapy and sojourns, which provided three weeks of psycho-medical treatment for 100 children from IDP camps in Znamenskoye, Chechnya. The project was implemented during the period from July to September 2000 by the Assistance Group, in close co-operation with the British NGO Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development (CPCD), and sponsored by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship. Other projects included, for example, the provision of clothes, essential foodstuffs and health care to Chechen IDPs.

In addition, the Assistance Group facilitated the implementation of a number of other humanitarian aid programmes, including delivery of medicine and medical equipment purchased by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship for the city hospital in Argun, Chechnya.

Since its creation the Assistance Group has accumulated wide experience of humanitarian aid work in Chechnya and there should be no doubt that it might be able resume the past volume of projects following its re-deployment to Chechnya. With this aim, nineteen projects have been prepared, all which are to be sponsored externally.

The Assistance Group played a vital role in informing the international community about the humanitarian situation and local needs in Chechnya. However, as a consequence of its deployment to Moscow, the Assistance Group's activity in this respect was limited to contacts with prominent Russian officials and organizations concerned with human and citizens' rights in the Russian Federation and particularly in Chechnya, such as the Russian Federation Ombudsman, the Russian President's Representative for Human and Citizens' Rights in Chechnya, "Memorial" and other Russian human rights groups.

The Assistance Group also took part in an international seminar on the rule of law, democratization and the human rights situation in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation, organized jointly by the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 29 to 31 May 2000 in Vladikavkaz. It also participates in meetings called by the Moscow-based UN Co-ordinators for Security and Humanitarian Affairs, as well as by other international organizations and NGOs in Moscow or Nazran, Ingushetia and Geneva.

During its stay in Moscow in 2000, the Assistance Group did its best to maintain contacts and working relations with the Russian Federal authorities as well as the OSCE participating States through their embassies and also with Moscow-based representatives of non-governmental and international organizations.

1.10 The Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference

Implementation of the mandate of the Office of the Personal Representative (PR) of the Chairperson-in-Office is closely connected with the tasks dealt with by the Minsk Group, its co-chairmen and the future Minsk Conference: progress in negotiations on the cessation of the armed conflict in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and on signing of a peace agreement. During 2000, some progress has been made in this respect. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan continued their meetings, in the search for a common approach to a resolution of the conflict. The meetings of the Presidents are of vital importance for progress in the negotiation process. It should also be noted that, during this period, the Office of the Personal Representative was an important factor in the promotion of the peace process on the ground.

The Office of the Personal Representative has remained active among the parties and has maintained contact at all levels of the political and military hierarchies. Information obtained through these contacts was forwarded to the Chairperson-in-Office to keep her up to date on all developments related to the conflict. The Office has functioned as a messenger between the parties and has also filled the role of co-ordinator of events organized at levels lower than that of the Presidents. In addition, the Office has been able to assist in creating and implementing important confidence-building measures.

Monitoring of the cease-fire takes place on a monthly basis and contributes to stability along the front lines. Since the second half of the year, monitoring has been carried out twice a month. During the reporting period, the parties have continued to request that monitoring be carried out to verify the situation at separate places along the front lines, thus showing that they trust and respect the Office's findings and recommendations. Monitoring provide the Chairperson-in-Office and members of the Minsk Group with valuable information on the situation on the ground. They also serve as an important confidence-building measure, since local commanders of the opposing sides are given an opportunity to communicate, using the OSCE radio equipment, thereby gaining a possibility to clear up any misunderstandings. As a follow-up to the meetings of the Presidents, the parties have strengthened the cease-fire regime and implemented certain measures previously suggested by the Office.

With regard to humanitarian issues in general, the Office maintained its contacts with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international organizations and NGOs. However, the Office devoted special attention during the reporting period to the fate of prisoners-of-war (POWs) and the people missing as a result of the fighting that went on in and around Nagorno-Karabakh until 1994. These issues were pursued by the Office in close co-operation with the ICRC.

The Nagorno-Karabakh leadership responded positively to the request by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to unconditionally release all POWs and handed over the remaining four to the Azerbaijani authorities. Also, in Yerevan, this action elicited a positive response. Armenia released six POWs. On 12 August a POW, captured a week earlier, was also handed over to Azerbaijan. On 28 July, Azerbaijan released two remaining POWs captured at the beginning of the year. Altogether 13 prisoners-of-war were released.

The Mixed Commission on Prisoners-of-War and Missing Persons, created under the umbrella of the Office, is planning to meet in Yerevan until the end of the year. The parties agreed on providing conditions for the Mixed Commission to intensify its joint work.

The release of practically all POWs, the swift release of the latest POW captured and progress in the work of the Mixed Commission provide proof of the pragmatic approach demonstrated by the parties and indicate that there are positive changes in the parties' attitude concerning co-operation on humanitarian issues. Progress in this field in turn has a positive impact on the negotiation process.

1.11 High-Level Planning Group

The High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) was established in accordance with the decisions of the Budapest Summit of Heads of State or Government of the participating States of the OSCE (then the CSCE), which took place in 1994, with the aim of intensifying action in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In accordance with its open-ended mandate, adopted by the Chairman-in-Office on 23 March 1995, the HLPG is tasked to make recommendations for the Chairman-in-Office on developing a plan for the establishment, force structure requirements and operations of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force for Nagorno-Karabakh, and in addition, making recommendations on, *inter alia*, the size and characteristics of the force, command and control, logistics, allocation of units and resources, rules of engagement and arrangements with contributing States.

The Head of the HLPG is appointed by the Chairman-in-Office, to whom he reports directly and from whom he receives directives. He is responsible for implementation of the HLPG's mandate and for organization and management of the HLPG's work and its staff. He liaises, as appropriate, with the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, with the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the Minsk Conference, with field Representatives and with the contributing States.

The HLPG is composed of military staff seconded by OSCE participating States and non-military staff employed by the OSCE Secretariat. The initial strength of the HLPG was 35; the current strength is nine.

As a result of its planning activity, the HLPG has developed a concept for an OSCE multinational peacekeeping force, to be deployed in the area of conflict. This concept covers four options, of which three are a mixture of armed peacekeeping troops and unarmed military observers and the fourth is an unarmed military observer mission.

In the spirit of its mandate, the HLPG continued to maintain and expand contacts with international bodies and institutions in order to improve its current information; in addition, it continuously adapted the concept through fact-finding missions, which resulted in the updating of the four options.

At the beginning of the year, in accordance with its mandate, the HLPG was given new guidelines by the Chairman-in-Office that included, *inter alia*, the resumption of logistics reconnaissance in order to update knowledge of the possibilities throughout the area, liaison and visits to relevant Missions and organizations related to peacekeeping operations, participation in monitoring tasks on the line of contact (LOC) organized by the Personal Representative of the CiO, support for the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, as required, a revision of option 4/98 (military observer mission) and updating of the standard operating procedures (SOPs).

To date, this year, option 4 has been revised and submitted to the Chairperson-in-Office for perusal and approval and the budget estimates of the three other options have been updated (costs and "quick start-up fund").

In accordance with the recommendations of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, and in view of the delicate situation in the area of conflict (repercussions of the assassination in Yerevan in October 1999 and the slow resumption of direct meetings between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan), the HLPG could not carry out the proposed logistics reconnaissance. On the other hand, participation in the monitoring tasks on the line of contact organized by the Personal Representative of the CiO continued, with the HLPG participating in nine monitorings since last November. These visits allow the HLPG to familiarize itself with local conditions and to make the acquaintance of local and national representatives, both military and civilian.

The revised standard operating procedures have been drafted and sent to the CiO and to the Secretary General for comment. The staff is currently working on producing a draft handbook on the area of conflict, memoranda of understanding and a status of force agreement for use in the event of a Mission. Furthermore, the HLPG is carrying out specific tasks as requested by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group.

Since last October, the HLPG has briefed high-ranking visitors on the current planning process, including the OSCE Secretary General, the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, the Permanent Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and military advisers from OSCE

delegations in Vienna. Other briefings have been carried out as required, especially for representatives of the Ministry of Defence or General Staff of OSCE participating States.

During the year, members of the HLPG attended seminars on peace support operations, conferences on confidence- and security-building measures and meetings relating to humanitarian and children's issues. Staff members have also visited military training centres to assess their usefulness to the HLPG and the OSCE in the event of an operation in the area of the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference. They participated in a training exercise of the Austrian sixth Infantry Brigade experiencing winter conditions, as an indication of what difficulties might be encountered in the mountainous regions of the mission area.

The HLPG is confident that it will be possible to adapt current plans to the needs of a future Mission in the area of conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference. In accordance with the directives of the Chairperson-in-Office, it is preparing to provide assistance and support to the Head of Mission, the force commander and the Mission operational staff in the field, in the event of deployment of a Mission.

1.12 OSCE Office in Yerevan

The OSCE Office in Yerevan, Armenia, was established by Permanent Council Decision No. 314 of 22 July 1999. The Office was expected to begin operating in November 1999, but the assassination of the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament in October delayed ratification of the memorandum of understanding between the OSCE and the Government of the Republic of Armenia. However, with the encouragement of the Armenian Government, members of the Office arrived in Yerevan in January 2000, and began their work on an unofficial basis. The Office was formally established on 9 February.

The staff of the Office currently consists of six international officers and including six Armenian nationals, five full time and one working part-time.

The mandate of the Office is broad, covering all aspects of OSCE activities in the political, economic, environmental and human dimensions.

The Office's first task was to gain an understanding of Armenia and the structures in place in the country. Thus, during the first months of its operation, the Office's main activity was to initiate and establish partnerships with governmental, parliamentary and civil society organizations in Armenia. In addition, the Office looked for areas of co-operation and mutual support with international organizations and the missions of participating States. Apart from networking in the country, the Office also established contacts with the Council of Europe and the European Commission through visits to Strasbourg and Brussels. The Office also worked closely with the ODIHR in monitoring and implementing projects that had been initiated before the establishment of the Office and in designing areas of future work.

It is worth noting that, at the time of the Office's establishment, Armenia was entering the final stages of applying for membership in the Council of Europe. It was recognized that the OSCE could provide helpful assistance in the implementation of many of the new commitments that Armenia had entered into as a prospective member of the Council of Europe. This coincidence of timing, and the open and positive welcome that the Office received, meant that, already from the start, it was asked to work on a wide range of issues.

In the political field, the Office was invited by the Chairman of the National Assembly to participate in the work of parliamentary committees and drafting groups. The Office is collaborating with the UNDP and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) on amendments to the electoral law, as a follow-up to the comments by the ODIHR on the 1999 parliamentary elections. It is hoped that this work will be completed before the end of 2000, although the closure of the UNDP section dealing with this matter will place a greater burden on the OSCE Office. The Office is also participating in work on constitutional amendments, including those related to the independence of the judiciary and the establishment of a system of separation of powers. Together with UNHCR and local organizations, the Office has also devoted a great deal of attention to matters relating to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ethnic minorities, and this will be a continuing area of future work.

One area of work which will assume increasing importance in the foreseeable future is action to combat corruption. The Office initiated the establishment of a working group of all international donors and institutions interested in this subject and has now secured the approval of the President and the Prime Minister for the creation of a joint government/international committee to draw up a comprehensive strategy for combating corruption. The aim is to agree jointly on such a strategy before the end of the year, in order to have in place the legislative and administrative measures required to tackle the problem of corruption. Representatives of civil society will be involved in the process, which needs to be open and transparent.

In the economic and environmental areas, Armenia is still trying to come to terms with the collapse of the command economy and the disruption caused by the disappearance of traditional markets and distribution networks. In addition, the country remains isolated from its neighbours and is suffering from a high rate of emigration. The Office facilitated Armenian participation in two OSCE economic fora and produced background papers, one for the Eighth Economic Forum, on post-conflict rehabilitation, and one on the state of the Armenian economy, based on extensive discussions with representatives from the private and public sectors. The latter paper will be used as a basis for a series of round-table discussions in the autumn. Since Armenia is also applying for membership in the World Trade Organization, the Office held meetings with a number of ministries, non-governmental organizations and international organizations on projects related to simplification of administrative procedures and harmonization of standards. In addition, the Office has been involved in issues of local self-government and decentralization. These will be ongoing areas of activity in co-operation with the Council of Europe.

Given the importance of trilateral, cross-border, regional economic co-operation in the South Caucasus, the Office held a series of meetings with the Governor and other private- and public-sector representatives in Tavoush Oblast to identify grass-roots projects with neighbouring areas. Both the President and the Prime Minister have encouraged this initiative. Concrete projects will emerge shortly.

The Office has engaged government officials and non-governmental organizations in a number of environmental protection initiatives and is supporting moves to ratify international conventions in the environmental field, in particular the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), which covers participation of non-governmental organizations in environmental decisions.

One of the main issues in the field of human rights was the work on the establishment of a public defender of human rights (Ombudsman). The Office worked with parliamentary and NGO representatives on the draft legislation and has established an international group of

potential donors/advisers to provide future support to the new institution. Through the ODIHR, the Office involved the Polish Ombudsman's Office in providing advice and a commentary on the Armenian legislation. The Office is already involved in public awareness initiatives in co-operation with the UN, the Council of Europe and domestic non-governmental organizations.

More broadly, the Office established working links with a wide range of non-governmental organizations in the area of human rights and provided support and assistance to projects designed to enhance professionalism and capacity in civil society. The Office also attended meetings of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights. In addition to monitoring ongoing ODIHR projects designed to increase public awareness of human rights issues, the Office developed its own proposals for 2001.

Following up on an ODIHR Seminar on Religious and Ethnic Tolerance, held in Yerevan in May, the Office has been monitoring developments in these areas and is currently funding the production and distribution of a brochure on religious groups written by the State Committee on Religious Affairs. In response to a request by the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, the Office worked on dissemination of human rights standards and international best practices in teaching institutions. In addition, the Ministry of Defence also asked for assistance in the preparation of legislation on alternatives to military service and conscientious objectors. The Office is also working with an authors' group on the production of a human rights textbook for eighth grade students. As the Office came to be better known, it experienced an increasing stream of individual callers with alleged human rights problems.

The Office provided successful assistance to an ODIHR project on a new registration system for permanent residents in Armenia. This involved revitalizing and expanding the inter-ministerial working group. Once the new system of registration has been agreed, consequent new legislation will be required, including provisions governing data protection.

At both the national and the regional levels, the Office supported initiatives in the areas of gender and youth. The Office also devoted attention to the problem of trafficking in human beings and was engaged in a joint project with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Other areas of attention relate to new legislation on the media and the complex of issues involved in decentralization of authority and local self-government. In both areas the Office was working with local partners, parliamentarians and international bodies. Extensive meetings on self-government questions have been held with governors and elected officials throughout the country.

During the reporting period, and after the initial months of the Office's existence, it became clear that there is a need for better co-ordination of national and international actions and assistance in Armenia. The Office will propose the formation of a number of working groups in order to enhance efficiency and avoid duplications.

From the outset, the Office has been welcomed in Armenia by all sections of society. The Office enjoys excellent access to the highest levels of Government and Parliament, and discussions have been open and frank. In business and civil society circles, the presence of the Office is regarded as positive. It is seen as providing the impetus for needed changes.

Now that the Office has taken root and has become familiar with the country, there is a need to prioritize among future engagements. The opening of an OSCE Office in Baku provided an opportunity for regional co-operation in appropriate areas.

1.13 OSCE Office in Baku

The mandate of the OSCE Office in Baku, Azerbaijan, is contained in Permanent Council Decision No. 318, of 16 November 1999. According to the relevant provisions of this Decision, the Office was to be established in January 2000. A memorandum of understanding between the OSCE and the Republic of Azerbaijan was signed on 19 June 2000. Following ratification of the memorandum of understanding, the Office was inaugurated by the Chairperson-in-Office and the Azeri Minister of Foreign Affairs on 18 July 2000.

The Office is to perform a broad range of tasks relating to all the dimensions of the OSCE's activities, including the human, political, economic and environmental aspects of security. These involve the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments as well as Azerbaijan's co-operation in the context of the OSCE, the facilitation of contacts and the promotion of exchange of information between the Chairperson-in-Office and other OSCE Institutions, the promotion of co-operation with other relevant international organizations and the establishment and maintenance of contacts with central and local authorities, universities, research institutes and NGOs. In addition, the Office will be expected to assist in arranging events with OSCE participation, and to perform other tasks deemed appropriate by the Chairperson-in-Office or other OSCE Institutions and agreed upon between the OSCE and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

For the performance of these tasks, the Office has six international staff, five of whom are seconded.

Early activities of the Office focused on the recruitment of international and local staff and the search for permanent office facilities. While international recruitment was completed in August, the long-term presence of seconded staff was not ensured until well into September.

Substantive activities in the early phase of operations were concentrated on the establishment of contacts and the building of co-operation networks, both within Azerbaijan and with OSCE Institutions and relevant international organizations at their headquarters.

The parliamentary elections, scheduled for 5 November 2000, gave impetus to the development of working relations with the ODIHR.

The Office noted a high level of interest in its presence in Baku shown by broad sectors of civil society.

In the development of its work programme, the Office is committed to respond to ongoing and emerging concerns of Azerbaijan in the light of OSCE priorities, in accordance with the terms of its mandate.

1.14 OSCE Mission to Georgia

In the period under review, the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia was expanded, in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 334 of 15 December 1999 (PC.DEC/334). The Mission was given additional conflict-prevention tasks (to observe and report on movements across the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation). These new tasks would be carried out in addition to the Mission's regular tasks in the fields of conflict

resolution (promotion of negotiations between the parties in conflict in Georgia, i.e. in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict and the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict), and the human dimension (monitoring and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Georgia – including South Ossetia and Abkhazia – and promotion of the building of a civil society and democratic institutions).

As of 15 November 2000, the Mission had an international staff of 60 from 24 countries. Of these, 42 were recruited in 2000 in connection with the widening of the Mission's mandate at the end of 1999. There are 41 local staff members.

1.14.1 Georgian – South Ossetian conflict

During the reporting period, the Georgian – South Ossetian conflict was characterized by a stable military situation, movement of people and goods, grass-roots rapprochement and an ongoing political dialogue. This provided a favourable environment for further progress in the conflict-resolution process.

During her visit to Georgia in early May, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office expressed the hope that the sides would make use of the existing comparative advantages for achieving faster progress than in other more frozen conflicts in the region. In the light of the OSCE Istanbul Summit Declaration of 1999, the Chairperson-in-Office expressed readiness to contribute to a solution by extending an invitation for a meeting of experts of the region in Vienna, provided that there was substantial progress in the preparations.

In the preparations for a possible meeting of experts, the Mission conducted extensive consultations with both sides, including meetings between the Head of Mission and Georgian President Shevardnadze and the South Ossetian leader Chibirov, as well as preparatory meetings with the Chairperson-in-Office in Vienna, in which the Russian side as mediator also participated. In June, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office decided to organize a meeting of experts, which took place from 11 to 13 July in Vienna/Baden.

The Vienna meeting was the last of four similar events at experts' level since 1999 between the Georgian and South Ossetian sides, with the mediation of the Russian Federation and the participation of North Ossetia-Alania and the OSCE Mission to Georgia. The aim of the Vienna experts' meeting was to bridge the gap – to the maximum extent possible – between the positions of the sides on the “intermediary document”, which constituted an interim agreement on the major principles and guidelines to be observed on the way to a final settlement.

Under the joint chairmanship of the Head of the Russian Federation Delegation and the Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, the participants reviewed the whole body of the draft intermediary document. Moreover, the Georgian and South Ossetian sides for the first time discussed issues directly related to a future constitutional relationship. As a result, three issues emerged which the experts found it expedient to deal with as part of one package: first, recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia and acceptance of special links between South Ossetia and North Ossetia-Alanian of the Russian Federation; second, attributes of a future South Ossetian status; and third, an international guarantee mechanism. As recommended by the Vienna/Baden meeting, both sides reviewed the package at political level and favoured further negotiations. A future mechanism of international guarantees emerged as an issue linked to further progress in the negotiation process.

As a follow-up to the proposal of the two sides at the Vienna/Baden meeting, representatives of the Austrian OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Tagliavini, Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the Caucasus, and Mayorov, Russian Ambassador-at-large and the Head of Mission, held consultations with both sides in September 2000 on the issue of guarantees concerning future agreements on the Georgian-Ossetian conflict settlement. The consultations yielded a common understanding that a future system of guarantees would include political and security measures, economic support and human rights protection, especially of refugees and ethnic minorities.

In accordance with the emergence of a common line by the mediators to maintain the Baden momentum, in the course of their new meetings in November in Tbilisi and Tskhinvali, the establishment of a regular schedule of meetings was proposed on the issues of the Baden package to be held alternatively in Moscow and Vienna.

After many delays and expressions of increasing concern by the Mission, the Georgian side finally presented the overdue draft law on the housing and property rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), during the visit of the Chairperson-in-Office to Georgia in May. The draft, which addresses a key problem in a comprehensive conflict settlement, has been circulated by the Mission to relevant international organizations for comments.

In July, a document embodying a package worth EUR 1.5 million, consisting of economic rehabilitation projects in the conflict area, was signed by both sides to the conflict, the European Commission delegation to Georgia and the Mission. The projects will be implemented by the European Commission under the aegis of the Mission.

On the one hand, progress in the political process has, regrettably, not been underpinned by signing of the long overdue Georgian-Russian economic rehabilitation agreement. Moreover, the Joint Control Commission (JCC) has been incapacitated as a result of government changes in the Russian Federation, which chairs this important body of the conflict-settlement process. The return of refugees and IDPs was much slower than expected. On the other hand, it is encouraging that the interaction between the two sides has demonstrated an ability to put aside outstanding political differences and co-operate on practical issues in emergency situations. This was the case when meetings took place at the central and local levels to find ways of alleviating the consequences of landslides in the summer, which temporarily cut the Trans-Caucasian motorway and thereby interrupted the provision of electricity and goods, especially to South Ossetia. The swift action taken helped to promote confidence between the two sides.

In general, the military situation remained calm and stable. However, criminality is a matter of growing concern. The initiative by the Mission to strengthen co-operation in combating crime in the conflict area resulted in the creation of the Joint Operation Group. It was therefore encouraging that the Joint Operation Group became fully operational in February. This is in line with the decisions by the JCC. Representatives of the Georgian police, the South Ossetian militia and the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF) are jointly running the Group. Operations, however, are badly hampered by insufficient communication equipment and data storage facilities.

The Mission is supportive of a programme of voluntary hand-over of arms, initiated by the Commander of the JPKF in the beginning of the year. By October 2000, more than 280 firearms, over 100 kg of explosives, mines, grenades and unguided missiles had been handed over by members of the local Ossetian and Georgian population. Even a 100-mm gun was delivered to the JPKF by a local resident.

As far as the OSCE's activities in South Ossetia are concerned, since January 2000 the Mission has been permanently present in Tskhinvali. The Mission is now in a much better position to maintain contacts with local authorities and the population, as well as with the JPKF, and – not least – to enhance a visible presence of the OSCE throughout the area, which is also part of the Mission mandate.

1.14.2 Georgian – Abkhazian conflict

Although there has been a lack of progress on key issues of a comprehensive settlement in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, the new Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General injected momentum into the talks at the beginning of the year. After a nine-month period with no meetings in the context of the Co-ordinating Council, the two sides met in January 2000 and followed up with meetings at the bilateral level, as well as in the Co-ordinating Council. In July, the two sides signed a protocol on measures for stabilization of the situation in the security zone. Regrettably, there is no agreement on peace and guarantees for prevention of resumption of hostilities and return of refugees and IDPs to the Gali district – a theme the Mission has repeatedly addressed at the meetings in the Co-ordinating Council.

The Abkhazian leadership has adamantly refused to discuss the issue of distribution of constitutional competencies, as proposed by the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary General.

On the ground, the general situation remained relatively calm, but unstable, in the conflict zone. The activities of armed irregulars have occasionally raised tensions in some areas, especially in the Gali district.

Pursuant to a decision by the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Oslo in 1998 and to the Istanbul Summit Declaration of 1999, the Mission held a series of extensive consultations with the UN concerning, first, the utility and feasibility of opening a human rights office in Gali, and second, arranging a joint UN/OSCE fact-finding mission to Gali.

At a meeting of the Co-ordinating Council in July, the Mission requested that the Abkhaz side clarify its view on the establishment of a branch of the Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, in Gali. The Abkhazian side made the issue contingent on the signing of two documents, an agreement on return of refugees and economic rehabilitation, and an agreement on peace and non-resumption of hostilities. It was agreed to dispatch a joint mission to assess conditions relevant to the safe, secure and dignified return of refugees and IDPs to the Gali district.

1.14.3 Human dimension

In the field of human rights and democratization, 2000 was characterized by several positive legislative reforms, including: (1) the ratification of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, (2) a new Penal Code, and (3) penitentiary reform. These reforms fulfill the obligations undertaken by Georgia in connection with its accession to the Council of Europe in 1999.

However, implementation of these, as well as of other obligations fixed by the Council of Europe, has lagged. Many reforms may even face a period of stagnation, owing in part to the economic crisis in Georgia, there being little or no money to put the reforms in motion. Judicial reforms – and hence the fight against corruption – were slowed by the fact that new and qualified judges have not been paid for almost 11 months. Measures in connection with the

planned repatriation of Meskhetians, who were deported in the 1940s, are behind schedule. The Mission has on several occasions expressed concern about the slow progress thus far made on implementation of repatriation measures.

In June 2000, a new Public Defender was finally elected – some nine months after the resignation of her predecessor in September 1999, and not within two months, as required by the law. On several occasions, the Mission voiced concern about the long delays in nominating and electing a new Public Defender. The Mission continued to maintain close contact with the Office of the Public Defender, which also this year approached the Mission for support in overcoming structural and organizational difficulties, as in 1999, when an ODIHR legal consultant reviewed the work of the Office.

The Mission also conducted various activities relating to the media. As a follow-up to meetings between Georgian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian journalists in Warsaw in 1997 and 1999, and in late 1999 in Sochi, the Mission organized several meetings between journalists from the three sides with the aim of fostering closer professional and personal ties across conflict lines by means of specifically targeted training programmes. The group of journalists agreed in principle to establish an NGO, which, *inter alia*, should work towards a freer exchange of information in the Caucasus, support journalists' rights and endeavour to bring about a higher level of professionalism among journalists.

In June 2000, another tripartite meeting of journalists took place in Moscow. Although there was no agreement on the main aim, which was to formally establish an association of Caucasian journalists, an accord was reached on exchange of information between Georgian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian news agencies and on publishing of a joint newsletter. The future role of the OSCE in arranging such meetings would be contingent upon the follow-up to the meetings mentioned above.

Georgian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian television journalists participated in a two-week training programme in June 2000, organized by the Mission and with financial support from the British authorities. Each team produced a short film, featuring situations in people's everyday lives. With the Mission's facilitation, the films will be shown on Georgian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian television.

The Mission and Radio Sakartvelo, which covers the whole of Georgia, with financial support from the ODIHR, prepared a series of six programmes on human rights themes, each in both the Russian and the Georgian languages.

In February, the Mission facilitated and hosted a first meeting between Vachtang Abashidze, Press Secretary of the President of Georgia, and Kosta Dzugaev, South Ossetian "minister of information and press". The two sides agreed to establish an e-mail connection and to begin preparation of short TV programmes. A follow-up meeting is planned in Tskhinvali.

The Mission continued to facilitate and fund a regular exchange of official newspapers between the Georgian and Abkhazian sides.

In 2000, the Mission has supported and supervised a Georgian NGO, Studio Re, which makes documentary films on social issues, especially concerning refugees, IDPs and migration. The project receives United States government funding.

This year, the Mission began to work on *gender issues* and, *inter alia*, assisted and supported the ODIHR in organizing and conducting a workshop on leadership for women. The

Mission also participated in and contributed to a large gender conference on trafficking in human beings held in Vienna. In the autumn, the Mission organized a first meeting of all Georgian NGOs working on gender issues.

During the Presidential *elections* in April 2000, the Mission provided personnel as well as material support to the ODIHR Election Observation Mission (EOM). As during the parliamentary elections in 1999, the Mission seconded two Mission members as long-term observers. Moreover, several Mission members worked as short-term observers in various regions, including South Ossetia.

1.14.4 Border monitoring

On 15 December 1999, pursuant to a request by the Georgian Government, the OSCE Permanent Council decided to expand the Mission's mandate to "observe and report on movement across the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation" (PC.DEC/334). Immediately before the final decision was taken, the Mission provided a feasibility study and a budget proposal. The Mission was in the extremely difficult position of having to start a completely new operation in mid-winter, practically without prior preparations, in an area accessible only by helicopter.

In mid-January, the first three international observers arrived, and on 17 February, the Shatili team base was opened permanently as an observation post. By 4 June, the Omalo team base had been established, and by 30 June, the Girevi team base had been opened. In mid-July, all 42 international observers had arrived. The airlift capability was greatly improved by the addition of the second Mi-8 helicopter, which began operating on 17 July. In the winter period, from mid-November 2000 to mid-April 2001, the number of observers will be reduced to 26.

From the outset of the border monitoring operation, patrols on the ground have occasionally been severely hampered by fast-changing weather and treacherous avalanches, landslides and torrential rains. The difficult weather conditions – be it in winter or in summer – have also delayed delivery of personnel and *matériel* to the selected team sites.

The situation in the monitored area remained calm and stable, with no observed or reported movements across the border. There have been reports of individual crossing attempts. The perpetrators have been either deterred from entering Georgia or detained by the Georgian border guard authorities.

The presence of the international community on the 81-kilometre border has had a positive effect on the performance of the Georgian border guards, who are providing security for the observers. Despite the extreme economic hardships being endured by the Georgian border guards, the Mission has noted with satisfaction an impressive improvement in their performance.

The OSCE presence has moreover demonstrated that it is a credible operation. It has met the intended objectives to the extent that it has defused a potentially volatile situation, and in doing so, has contributed to stability in the region. However, the general situation is still uncertain, with the possibility that tensions may increase.

1.15 OSCE Mission to Moldova

During 2000, the OSCE Mission to Moldova played an active role as mediator in the dialogue between the Republic of Moldova and Trans-Dniestria, aimed at achieving a political settlement of their conflict. The Mission attended a number of high-level meetings, including a meeting in May between President Lucinschi and Trans-Dniestrian leader Smirnov. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office visited Moldova in July and travelled to Moldova's Trans-Dniestrian region for meetings in Tiraspol. The Mission also participated in meetings of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office with the Chairman of the newly established Russian Federation State Commission to Assist in Political Resolution of the Trans-Dniestrian Conflict.

Along with the Russian and Ukrainian mediators, Mission members attended negotiations at the experts' level between the sides, and at the parties' request participated actively in analysis and development of negotiating documents. In co-operation with the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, the OSCE Mission in March organized a weeklong Working Table on Resolution of the Trans-Dniestrian Conflict. At this gathering, international experts and representatives of the two sides together with the mediators produced draft documents for a comprehensive political solution to the conflict. Through the summer and autumn, the Mission continued active promotion, co-ordination, and participation in the negotiating process.

Members of the Mission participated actively in the work of the Joint Control Commission (JCC), the body responsible for implementing the July 1992 cease-fire agreement and supervising the joint peacekeeping forces in the Security Zone. On several occasions, Mission members observed withdrawals of troops and equipment from the Security Zone. Mission members also took part in inspections of the joint peacekeeping forces, including participation in aerial inspections of the Security Zone. The Mission supported a compromise which permitted specially designated Moldovan units to complete clearing of the last minefield in the Security Zone, from May to August. The Mission continued to press, with all the participants in the JCC, for a comprehensive proposal, originally submitted in late 1999, for confidence-building and military-transparency measures in the Security Zone.

Mission members closely followed the issue of withdrawal of Russian arms and equipment from Moldova, and maintained close contact with the Commander of the Operational Group of Russian Forces, based in Tiraspol. In March, the Mission organized a visit by General Aussedat, Head of the OSCE Assessment Mission, for consultations with appropriate Moldovan, Trans-Dniestrian and Russian officials. The Mission actively pressed local authorities to co-operate in implementing the Istanbul Summit decisions with respect to the withdrawal of Russian arms and troops, and also reported and consulted frequently on this matter with delegations in Vienna. The Mission made several specific, detailed proposals for use of the OSCE Voluntary Fund established to support the withdrawal of Russian troops, arms, ammunition, and other military equipment from the Trans-Dniestrian region. During a visit of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, access to Russian military sites in Tiraspol was not impeded by local authorities. Otherwise, Trans-Dniestrian officials consistently denied the Mission access to key Russian military sites and actively prevented operations aimed at implementing the Istanbul decisions on withdrawal.

The Mission encouraged implementation of an OSCE-inspired, EU-funded project to repair the Gura-Bicului bridge, thus reopening the main highway between Chisinau and Odessa. At the Mission's initiative, the Austrian Chairmanship took initial steps, including a technical assessment, to support a project of restoration of two major electric power stations along the Dniestr River.

The Mission helped with the development and implementation of a particularly active programme of contacts and co-operation between parliamentarians on both sides. In March, the Mission attended a meeting of Moldovan and Trans-Dniestrian parliamentarians at which an agreement was signed on co-operation between the parliaments. The Mission closely followed subsequent activities implementing this agreement.

At the beginning of the year, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly established a five-member Team on Moldova. In January, the Head of the Team, the Finnish Member of Parliament Kimmo Kiljunen, visited Moldova to obtain the agreement of both sides to the Team's proposed activities. Further visits took place in March and June, leading to a special resolution on Moldova at the annual meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest in July. The Team visited Moldova between 28 September and 1 October, and had meetings with both the speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, Diacov, and the Chairman of the Trans-Dniestrian Supreme Soviet, Marakutsa. Parliamentarians from both sides were also invited to participate in a seminar on the modalities of self-government, planned to take place in January 2001 in Sweden and Finland.

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities visited Moldova in May, and the Mission jointly organized and participated in a seminar on language and educational issues sponsored by the HCNM. The Mission maintained contacts and pursued follow-up activities on these questions with appropriate Moldovan officials, and continued its involvement in a wide range of other issues in the human dimension. Mission members followed the local elections in Trans-Dniestria in March and April, and documented significant deficiencies and abuses in them. On several occasions, Mission members assisted visiting representatives from the Council of Europe, and the Mission maintained close contacts and co-ordination with the Council of Europe on issues of mutual interest and concern.

The Mission actively supported development of and contacts between non-governmental organizations on both sides of the Dniestr. Despite resistance from local authorities, in April the Mission organized a two-day capacity-building seminar for NGOs from the two sides in the Mission's Tiraspol office. The Mission helped representatives of the sides to develop a plan of activities for the proposed joint historical commission, initially agreed upon at a seminar sponsored by the ODIHR, with the aim of producing texts agreed by both sides on recent local history, including the conflict, for use in schools on both sides.

The Mission closely followed issues relating to the freedom of the press, in particular, the continuing suppression by the Trans-Dniestrian authorities of the independent newspaper *Novaia Gazeta*. In April, with the help of a grant from the ODIHR, the Mission supported an independent seminar of journalists from the two sides to be held in Tiraspol. The meeting was dispersed by Trans-Dniestrian security officials.

In 2000, the Mission continued its direct engagement in developments in the case of the Ilascu group, several members of which are serving sentences in Tiraspol prison on charges of murder and terrorism. The Mission obtained permission for prison visits to Ilascu in conjunction with visits by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and a high-level Council of Europe delegation. As a result of the discussions at the May meeting of President Lucinschi and Smirnov, the Mission was asked to investigate the possibility of arranging for another OSCE country to conduct a new trial of Ilascu and his associates. The Mission is continuing its efforts in this area, in addition to its ongoing attempts to improve access to visitors and medical care for members of the Ilascu group.

The Mission received and responded to a very large number of petitions and complaints on a wide variety of subjects from Moldovan citizens on both sides of the Dniestr River. In January, the Mission added a human rights assistant to its local staff in order to better handle the volume of citizen inquiries and complaints.

1.16 OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine was established last year (PC.DEC/295) as a new form of co-operation between the OSCE and the Government of Ukraine. A memorandum of understanding was signed in July 1999, and ratified by the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine on 10 February 2000. The staff consists of the Project Co-ordinator, two international staff members and, at the present time, five locally recruited staff. Additional international or local experts can be hired for the implementation of the projects for short or long terms, as required by the projects.

During the reporting period, the Project Co-ordinator continued the work on planning, implementing and monitoring projects between relevant Ukrainian authorities and the OSCE and its institutions. The projects were mainly financed by voluntary contributions from OSCE participating States. One of the key lessons learnt in the past year was that sufficient funding is a crucial prerequisite for the successful implementation of the Project Co-ordinator's mandate.

The implementation of projects started on the basis of a list of project proposals submitted by the Project Co-ordinator to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and approved by the latter in early January 2000. Most of the initial projects were of a pilot character, and the Project Co-ordinator therefore expended much time and effort during the reporting period in further developing the projects, and also in exploring possibilities for new projects.

The focus of the Project Co-ordinator's work was on activities to support Ukraine in adapting its legislation, institutions and processes to the requirements of a modern democracy based on the rule of law. Given limited resources, concentration on key issues and institutions was crucial. Special emphasis was placed on support for the rule of law as an important general priority.

The projects were basically designed along two main axes: assistance in the adaptation of legislation, and support for key institutions, with a view to the rule of law. In February 2000, a new situation evolved in the parliament, lending new momentum to the legislative process. This opened up new possibilities for the Project Co-ordinator to provide assistance in legislation. A strengthening of the judicial institutions is the key to promoting rule of law under the current conditions. In this regard, Ukraine faces several challenges that afford opportunities for assistance.

During the reporting period, the ODIHR was the Project Co-ordinator's most important partner on the OSCE side in implementing projects. The Director of the ODIHR, Ambassador Stoudmann, visited Kiev on 3 March with the ODIHR's Rule of Law Advisers in order to assess the implementation of the relevant projects in Ukraine.

Some of the most important project activities in the past year are outlined below.

Comprehensive review of human rights legislation. The project aims at bringing Ukrainian legislation regarding human rights into line with European and international standards. In implementing the project, international and Ukrainian experts actively worked

with all the relevant actors in the legislative process throughout the reporting period. In the second half of the year, a project regarding reform of the so-called “*propiska* system” was started with the presidential administration.

Technical and practical support to the Ukrainian Ombudsman. The Project Co-ordinator supported the Office of the Ombudsman through several projects of technical and advisory assistance. Areas of particular attention were management of the Office and administration of complaints, as well as support by appropriate equipment.

Assistance to the Supreme Court. The Project Co-ordinator initiated the establishment of a nation-wide database of Court rulings and jurisprudence, in order to improve access to this material for judges, including those at the regional and district levels. The Project Co-ordinator also provided assistance in the establishment of an administrative court system. There are plans for technical assistance in this field to become a major project as soon as the necessary legislative basis has been completed.

Combating trafficking in human beings. The Project Co-ordinator continued providing technical assistance to support the National Co-ordination Council against Trafficking under the Office of the Ombudsman. The Co-ordination Council serves as a focal point both for a national strategy and for international co-operation. In the framework of the project, special emphasis was placed on legislation and law enforcement.

1.17 OSCE Mission to Tajikistan

Mandated by the General Agreement on Peace and National Accord as well as by the decisions of the Permanent Council, the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan increased its efforts in 2000 to assist the parties to fulfill the implementation of the General Agreement. With the implementation of the General Agreement officially declared completed with the parliamentary elections in February, the year 2000 marked an important watershed for the OSCE Mission to Tajikistan. However, important segments of the provisions envisioned in the General Agreement require further efforts, particularly regarding the military protocol and the reform of the power structures. In relation to these segments, the OSCE Mission continued to facilitate implementation throughout the year.

With the opening of a new field office in Khujand, the Mission’s activities in the regions were upgraded, thus ensuring that the Mission’s activities in the fields of security, human rights, democratization, and the rule of law provided full support to the post-conflict reconstruction process in Tajikistan, at both the central and the regional levels. Although the range and number of the Mission’s activities has constantly grown over the past years, the number of seconded staff has remained unchanged, with a maximum authorized strength of eleven international Mission members.

The parliamentary elections held in Tajikistan on 27 February 2000 were monitored by the OSCE/UN Joint Election Observation Mission (JEOMT), which was actively supported by the Mission. In the pre-election period, the Mission, in co-operation with other organizations, prepared and conducted a series of voter seminars, candidate forums and other election-related activities throughout Tajikistan. Although the elections fell short of meeting basic OSCE standards, they took place in a comparatively pluralistic environment that constituted an encouraging step on the road towards greater democracy. Launching and strengthening co-operation with the new parliament has since been one focus for the Mission’s activities, mainly

taking the form of organizing training and seminars in co-operation with the ODIHR, on legislative procedures and other topics for the newly elected parliamentarians.

Throughout the reporting period, the Mission sought to adapt its role to the post-peace-process situation now characterizing the country. It achieved this by expanding its geographical coverage to the key northern region of Leninabad, while at the same time stepping up its activities and broadening the scope of its projects in those areas most relevant to the new situation, namely, support for civil society and democratic institutions, the rule of law, monitoring of human rights and local capacity-building.

As the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT) came to an end in May 2000, the OSCE Mission expanded its political activities to areas previously covered by the UN Mission, while seeking to reinforce its collaboration with other organizations also working in the field. Mandated by the UN Security Council decision of 12 May 2000, the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace-Building (UNTOP) was established as a substantially smaller successor office to UNMOT.

Three years after having received approval from the Permanent Council, the Mission in February opened an office in the Northern City of Khujand, covering the province of Leninabad. This long-awaited opening allowed for better coverage of this key area lying at the mouth of the Ferghana Valley, and also for a considerable expansion of the scope of the Mission's activities and an intensification of its contacts with civil society and the political class in the north of the country. At the same time, the Mission was able to launch a number of projects relating to the media, civic education and human rights.

Despite this important geographical expansion, the Mission is still unable to fully implement its mandate in the mountainous Gorni Badakhshon province, mostly due to distance and geographical conditions. Therefore, the Mission is preparing to open a new field office in Khoroug at the beginning of next year to facilitate its activities there.

During the reporting period, the Mission increased its activities in all the areas of its mandate, concentrating particularly on democratization, institution-building, the rule of law, political parties' activities, civic education and gender issues, human rights and freedom of the media. At the same time, the Mission expanded its activities in the economic and environmental dimension. Throughout the year, the Mission further built on the good relations established with the Tajik authorities, with a view to widening co-operation with them in all sectors.

The year 2000 marked further expansion of the Mission's activities in the realm of project implementation in key areas of its mandate. Pursuant to its strategy of strengthening civil society, assisting in the development of free media and promoting democracy and human rights, the Mission implemented a wide array of projects, thanks to the generous help of various donors and particularly OSCE participating States.

One field of activity was support to civil society, focusing on youth, but at the same time also stepping up efforts regarding civic education of political parties and local authorities, for example through the organization of a wide range of seminars in all regions of Tajikistan. In addition to the periodical meetings of national and regional leaders of political parties and movements hosted by the Mission in Dushanbe, ten round tables, seminars and training events were organized in Khujand, Kurghon-Teppa, Dusti, Garm, Tursunzade and Hissor with the participation of over 300 regional and national political leaders.

As in previous years, the Mission was particularly active in the field of the media. While continuing ongoing projects such as the rehabilitation of five rural newspapers, the Mission took on new challenges during 2000, notably the expansion of the rehabilitation programme to a further eight newspapers, including for the first time a non-governmental publication, and provision of support for the creation of an independent news agency, both in the Northern city of Khujand.

After more than one-and-a-half years of advocating free and independent media with the central authorities in Dushanbe, the OSCE-supported independent radio and television project in Khatlon was finally granted permission to acquire the necessary operating licences and the Mission could begin implementing this project.

Furthermore, the preparations for a national women's magazine were completed, and the project is reaching its implementation phase. As a contribution to the strengthening of the role of the media at the regional level, the Mission, in co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, will organize the Second Central Asia Media Conference in Dushanbe in November 2000.

The Mission continued to invest a great deal of time and effort in promoting greater gender equality and combating increasing levels of violence against women. In this respect, the seminar programme launched in 1999 was reviewed, assessed and revised in order to make it more effective. Thus for this year, more than 48 women's seminars have been conducted, reaching approximately a thousand women from all regions of the country. The problems raised by the women attending the seminars, as well as by the participants in the 20 women's support groups established in the country, covered a wide range of issues, from political and social rights, women's rights in Islam and economic empowerment to health services. The overall number of seminars conducted in the past two years has reached 360, with more than 7,200 participants.

With the addition by mid-year of a seconded Mission member in charge of environmental and economic issues, the Mission was able to more thoroughly cover these issues, which are of the highest priority for Tajikistan in the current period of post-conflict rehabilitation. A workshop for small entrepreneurs and NGOs acting in the economic field was organized in Dushanbe, and the Mission is considering a number of specific proposals advanced by the participants, regarding, for example, the creation of centres for providing legal assistance to small and medium-sized businesses and organizing professional training for entrepreneurs. Among the priority projects envisaged for implementation are seminars on economic rights, basic business training for the participants in the women's support groups and a round table on the Aarhus Convention.

The Mission also sought to intensify its activities relating to the prevention of drug abuse and drug trafficking. In this field, the Mission organized a number of round tables on the topic, both in Dushanbe and in the regions, in an effort to foster open and useful debate on the issue between specialists working in the field and representatives of law-and-order agencies.

In the field of human rights monitoring and protection, the Mission continued to actively monitor the situation both in Dushanbe and in the regions, bringing specific cases to the attention of the authorities when necessary, as an effort to uphold OSCE principles in this field. In this respect, the field offices were particularly active, taking on a number of cases ranging from illegal detention and abuse of power by the authorities to trafficking in women and monitoring of trials. The Mission monitored a number of human rights cases and trials, many of them being dealt with in a confidential manner in order to protect the victims involved. In some cases, the

Mission found it more appropriate to address the public through the OSCE institutions, and to encourage local human rights organizations to advocate publicly. In these efforts, the Mission enjoyed strong support of the Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE Institutions. The Mission's efforts and the support of the Chairperson-in-Office were particularly instrumental in having one case reviewed by the Supreme Court, as a result of which a death sentence was commuted to 15 years imprisonment.

During the reporting period, the Mission and its offices have increased their co-operation with and support for local human rights organizations, engaging in promotion and advocacy with NGOs regarding specific cases, in an effort to foster the creation of an active and efficient civil society component in this field as well. The Mission is preparing a research programme on trafficking in migrants, particularly women and children, together with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) and the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC), as well as the Tajik NGO Modar. A number of developments have been of concern to the Mission in the realm of human rights, particularly in connection with the rise of the illegal Islamic party Tahrir, and the crackdown by the authorities on its members.

During the reporting period, the Mission for the first time gained access to detention facilities throughout the country, thus laying the groundwork for future co-operation with the relevant Tajik authorities.

Increasingly, the Mission has focused its activities on promoting a better understanding of human rights and the OSCE principles among representatives of the judiciary and law-and-order institutions. In this respect, a number of seminars and training events have taken place in 2000. The Mission also organized a conference on human rights in pre-trial detention in collaboration with the office of the regional prosecutor of the Leninabad region. This conference brought together all branches of the judiciary from various regions of the country as well as representatives from neighbouring regions of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The year 2000 saw a strengthening of the Mission's collaboration with many of the organizations working in Tajikistan. This is particularly true of the UN organizations present in the country, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with which the Mission implemented an important civic education project, addressing specific target groups: local government representatives, local party representatives, youth, active women and the independent media. Organizations such as the American Bar Association (ABA), the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the Counterpart Consortium and the Open Society Institute (OSI) are among the main international NGOs with whom the Mission fruitfully co-operated on various projects during the year.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the signature of the Helsinki Final Act, the Mission organized a number of events in Dushanbe and in its field offices.

1.18 OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia

During the reporting period, the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia (CALO) continued to develop activities in all three OSCE dimensions, in conformity with its mandate, and guided by the OSCE principles of indivisible and comprehensive security.

Based on its primary task of conflict prevention, the CALO closely monitored the political and security situation in Uzbekistan, in particular in August and September, when there was an incursion of paramilitary groups into the country. During that period, CALO reported intensively to the Chairperson-in-Office, the OSCE participating States and the Secretary General, in order to keep them abreast of the current situation. Also, consultations were initiated with Uzbek officials and representatives of the OSCE participating States' embassies and international organizations based in Uzbekistan.

CALO facilitated the organization of several high-level OSCE visits to Uzbekistan. In February, the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Kubiš, visited Uzbekistan. He met with the Foreign Minister and other high-ranking Uzbek officials, as well as with the Regional Representative for Central Asia of the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP).

In June, within the framework of her Central Asian tour, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria Ferrero-Waldner, visited Uzbekistan, accompanied by the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Kubiš, and representatives of the Troika, the ODIHR and the European Commission.

At the meetings with President Karimov, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamilov and other officials, as well as representatives of local NGOs, ways of further promoting Uzbekistan's commitments aimed at implementation of OSCE principles, and the current situation in the country were discussed.

In July, heads of OSCE delegations in Vienna visited Uzbekistan as part of their Central Asian tour. The visit demonstrated a growing interest in the region by the OSCE participating States, and further promoted a fruitful dialogue with the Uzbek authorities and representatives of larger segments of society.

CALO representatives participated in a number of round tables and seminars, and delivered lectures. In this connection, the round table on topical problems of implementation of the law on freedom of expression and religious organizations, initiated by the Office of the Authorized person of the *Oliy Majlis* for Human Rights (Ombudsman) is deserving of note. In March and October, CALO representatives gave lectures to students of the Academy of State and Social Construction under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

During these events, the Office concentrated on OSCE documents and internationally acknowledged standards, as well as on the Organization's activities in Central Asia, with special emphasis on Uzbekistan.

The CALO has devoted due attention to media development and public relations. In January, it took part in an international conference on mass media in Central Asia, organized by three NGOs covering media issues.

Also in January, the CALO provided assistance required for the trip of two journalists from Uzbekistan to Vienna, where they attended a meeting organized by the Austrian Chairmanship for media representatives from Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus. In the aftermath of that event, the local press published articles on the OSCE and the Austrian Chairmanship's involvement in the Central Asian region.

The CALO marked the OSCE's 25th anniversary by launching a website on the Internet, in co-operation with the Secretariat. Also, a press release was published and distributed

throughout the country, and the Head of the Office, Ambassador Gantchev, gave a comprehensive interview to the local press.

In the context of human dimension activities, the CALO implemented programmes that were part of its regular budget, as well as ODIHR-supported projects. Based on an assessment of the country's needs, and the mandate of the Office, the CALO's programmes focused on rule of law, NGO development and gender issues.

In the field of rule of law, the CALO together with the ODIHR, implemented a training programme on international human rights law standards attended by 90 prosecutors, lawyers and judges in three cities. The aim of the training was to provide law enforcement officials with knowledge and understanding of fair trial procedures, and to encourage the use of international mechanisms and standards.

The CALO with the support of the ODIHR, completed a cycle of three training sessions as part of the Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting Programme, aimed at strengthening the capacities of local human rights activists working in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Twenty-five participants from different parts of Uzbekistan completed the three-part course, led by three trainers from Russia and Poland with long experience in human rights. The programme succeeded in increasing co-operation between human rights activists in Uzbekistan, developing their links with international activists and equipping participants with skills to more effectively carry out monitoring and reporting and to address communications to international treaty bodies, such as the UN Human Rights Committee.

For the past years, the CALO and the ODIHR have been working with the Uzbekistan Ombudsman institution to assist in the strengthening of its capacities. In April and May, the CALO and the ODIHR invited the former Ombudsman of Alaska to share his experience and expertise. He prepared comments on proposals to amend the national Ombudsman law, participated in a round table with Government officials and led a training course for the newly appointed regional representatives in the Ombudsman's office.

In 2000, the CALO continued working closely with local non-governmental organizations to strengthen their networking and lobbying potential through the creation of an NGO network. Three NGO strategy meetings were organized in 2000.

In February, the NGOs established a common network structure with a co-ordinating council and regional bodies. At the meeting in May, participants developed the network's structure, and began a discussion on network membership, financing, regional work, co-operation with the Government and the media, etc. In September, the participating NGOs began planning a national NGO forum that they hope to hold with Government officials in early 2001.

The CALO considers the meetings to have been an important success, and looks upon the development of the network as a milestone in the NGO development process in Uzbekistan.

As a follow-up to the NGO-Government meetings held in 1998 and 1999, the CALO and the ODIHR, jointly with the National Centre for Human Rights and the Administration of the Samarkand Region, organized an NGO-Government meeting in April in Samarkand. The topic of the meeting was the role of NGOs in society and their co-operation with local authorities. It attracted around 40 participants from NGOs and city and regional government departments. An NGO-Government meeting was also held in Andijan in July.

The CALO continued working with women's groups to help them increase their understanding and knowledge of women's rights, and assume a larger role in transformations of civil society. In October, the CALO and the ODIHR launched a programme to train a selected group of 15 to 20 women on how to effectively monitor and report on violations of women's rights. Participants were selected from amongst women leaders, lawyers, and NGO representatives, based on their responses to a questionnaire. After the training in October, participants will be encouraged to carry out their own "pilot" monitoring or reporting project.

Together with the Open Society Institute (OSI)/Soros Foundation, the CALO organized two women's strategy development meetings in February and June. Participants agreed to develop women's education programmes, increase co-operation between NGOs, the Government and the media, improve the economic status of women, upgrade the legislative framework for the protection of women's rights and promote a new image of women in society.

During the past year, the CALO has sharpened its focus and developed a clearer approach in its work in the field of human rights monitoring and reporting.

On a daily basis, the CALO received written and oral individual complaints. The majority of these involved violations which had occurred during pre-trial detention and court proceedings, and had allegedly been perpetrated by the police, personnel of the Prosecutor's office and other law-enforcement bodies. The complaints were forwarded to the appropriate national authority, requesting that they be considered. Since the beginning of the year, national authorities, in particular the Ombudsman and Prosecutor's office, have more and more frequently been responding in writing to the CALO concerning these requests.

The CALO regularly carries out trial monitoring, and focuses on cases involving people on trial for their religious or political beliefs. According to the CALO's assessment, the frequency and size of these trials have increased during the past two years. During the period from March to October 2000, the CALO monitored 14 trials, in which a total of 180 people were accused of taking part in illegal religious activities. At least three quarters of these people were sentenced to prison terms exceeding 14 years, for attempting to overthrow the constitutional order, disseminating leaflets containing threats to public order, and organizing or participating in illegal religious organizations and criminal communities.

The CALO is particularly concerned about allegations made by those on trial, their family members and lawyers, that physical and psychological pressure is routinely used to extract "confessions" from the accused.

During the reporting period, the CALO compiled data on persons sentenced to death in 1999 and 2000, based on the cases it monitored. The appropriate authorities would not provide this information officially. The CALO gathered the names of a total of 52 persons sentenced to death. In two of these cases, in the spring of 2000, the sentences were converted to 15 years imprisonment. The CALO also received confirmed information on several deaths in detention during the reporting period.

The CALO has been actively involved in economic and environmental issues. It arranged for the participation of a three-member delegation from Uzbekistan in the third preparatory seminar for the Eighth Economic Forum, held in January in Tbilisi. The delegation, which included two representatives from NGOs and a Government official, actively participated in the working group discussions on issues related to post-conflict rehabilitation.

The CALO played an active part in the Eighth Economic Forum, from 11 to 14 April in Prague. In addition to sending a four-member group representing effective Uzbek NGOs to the event, the CALO contributed a detailed report on water and energy issues affecting economic performance to working group II.

The CALO prepared qualified groups of Uzbek delegates to take part in the regional seminars on global environmental law and on regional environmental issues, held in September and October in Almaty, Kazakstan.

The CALO, in consultation with Uzbek officials and the Tashkent-based embassies of the United States and the United Kingdom, and the World Bank, played a co-ordinating role in organizing the two rounds of visits to Uzbekistan in March by the OSCE mission led by the United Kingdom. Since the return of the delegation to Vienna, the CALO has followed up with periodic update meetings with the counterpart organizations, to assess developments regarding the water initiative for Central Asia.

The CALO, and other international organizations, participated in the opening session of the Central Asia Cooperative Waterborne Radio-nuclide Monitoring Experiment on the Syr Darya and Amu Darya Rivers conducted by the Cooperative Monitoring Center (CMC) of the Sandia National Laboratories, New Mexico, USA. Countries of the region – Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan – were represented by government officials and experts from nuclear science establishments.

The CALO continued to develop comprehensive networking with government officials and international organizations, with a view to promoting regional co-operation on tackling economic and environmental problems. The contacts have been extended to regional and Uzbekistan-wide higher education and research institutions for co-operation on studying options for improving economic, agricultural and environmental conditions.

The CALO has conducted 11 consecutive workshops on economic and environmental subjects throughout Uzbekistan. It has recognized the generation of domestic co-operation at the grass-roots level as an effective and practical tool for developing civil society, solving community-related problems, and developing an appreciation of the merit of co-operation in the country. The theme of the week-long workshops has been promoting community-level co-operation for sustainable economic and environmental development throughout Uzbekistan. These events have so far covered ten provinces, including major towns in the Fergana Valley, and have imparted technical know-how on developing small and medium-sized businesses and easing environmental concerns in a co-operative fashion to more than 450 participants who came from local governments, NGOs or private businesses, or were environmental activists.

1.19 OSCE Centre in Almaty

In the second year of its existence, the OSCE Centre in Almaty, Kazakhstan, continued its manifold activities in all the security dimensions dealt with by the OSCE.

In the political dimension, the Centre facilitated the arrangement of a round table for discussion of the recommendations issued by the ODIHR Election Observation Mission after last year's parliamentary elections. Among the participants in the round table were representatives from the Kazakh Government, parliament and civil society. Contacts with the Kazakh Government were also maintained through the Centre's participation as an observer in several meetings of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia organized

by the Government of Kazakhstan. The Centre also monitored the state of the mass media in the light of the commitments assumed by Kazakhstan as an OSCE participating State. On many occasions, the Centre also sent representatives to give talks at universities and research institutes on OSCE involvement in Central Asia.

In November 1999, the Centre was joint organizer of a regional seminar on the management of transboundary waterways, which was an initial contribution to the OSCE initiative on the important issue of water management in Central Asia. Other activities within the economic and environmental dimension included the Centre's efforts in organizing the participation of representatives from the Kazakh Government, research institutes, the business community and non-governmental organizations in the OSCE Eight Economic Forum in Prague in April 2000.

Some progress was made in the environmental field. A memorandum of understanding on co-operation in environmental matters was concluded between the Ministry of the Environment, the parliament and environmental organizations in Kazakhstan. This was largely the result of local seminars on the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) (participation of non-governmental organizations in environmental decisions) organized by the Centre as a follow-up to last year's regional seminar on the issue.

Monitoring the human dimension situation in Kazakhstan constitutes an important part of the Centre's activities. During the reporting period, special emphasis was placed on facilitating the development of a better monitoring infrastructure in the regions. The Centre continued executing projects agreed upon between the Government of Kazakhstan and the ODIHR concerning various aspects of fostering human rights and the rule of law. Particularly important were the projects dealing with development of awareness of women's rights, prison service training, assistance to civil society, establishment of an Ombudsman office, and assistance on legal reform.

Most of these projects were implemented in close co-operation with non-governmental organizations, and regularly co-ordinated with other international organizations. An important advantage for the projects has been the development of close co-operation with a number of governmental structures, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and the Human Rights Commission under the President.

Moreover, the Centre was involved in a wide range of different areas through smaller, ad hoc projects dealing with free legal aid for women in need, local self-government, measures to combat corruption, raising of awareness of trafficking in women and improvement of the rule of law in all three OSCE dimensions.

The Centre in Almaty hosted a number of high-level OSCE visits, among which the following could be noted: the Chairperson-in-Office the Austrian Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner; the High Commissioner on National Minorities; the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Central Asia; and a large group of OSCE Ambassadors from Vienna.

1.20 OSCE Centre in Ashgabad

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan, has been functioning since January 1999, in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 244 of 23 July 1998. The first Head of Centre, Paul Ullmann, seconded by Austria, was replaced by the Hungarian diplomat Istvan

Venczel in January 2000. On 7 April, a new Human Dimension Officer arrived and the international staff was further augmented in July by an Administration/Finance Officer on a fixed-term contract. In total, the Centre has five international and five locally employed staff members.

In accordance with its mandate, the Centre has continued its activities in various fields. It prepared the visit to Turkmenistan of Secretary General Kubiš, in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia, and arranged a meeting with President Niyazov. On 30 and 31 March, an OSCE delegation visited Ashgabad to discuss matters connected with the UK-led OSCE initiative on regional water management. During the discussions, a substantial difference in approaches emerged on this issue. The Turkmen Government was unable to support the initiative, whereas the President indicated his readiness to co-operate on a bilateral basis.

On 29 May, the Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ferrerro-Waldner, visited Turkmenistan as the head of a large delegation. During her talks with President Niyazov and Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov, a number of important issues were raised. Rapprochement was not achieved in the views of the two sides.

On 14 July, a large group of heads and members of national delegations to the OSCE made Ashgabad their final stop on a tour of the region. The Centre sought to ensure that this visit gave a realistic view of the Centre's working conditions. The visitors also met with Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov.

During the reporting period, relations between the Centre and the Government of Turkmenistan became somewhat more relaxed, although no significant progress on specific issues was achieved.

In September 2000, the Centre organized the second regional meeting of Heads of OSCE Missions. Prior to the meeting, training on the drug control work of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) was provided for the political officers in the regional OSCE field presences.

This year, the Centre devoted greater attention to issues of regional security and constantly sought to gain the co-operation of the Turkmen Government in this field. Although the Turkmen leadership has a very specific point of view regarding regional security — it is committed to neutrality and preferences bilateral over regional events — in principle they did not object to a proposal for an OSCE seminar on regional security issues to be organized later. The Turkmen Government has been pursuing an active foreign policy in its relations with Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, aimed at reducing tensions in the region. At present, however, it is distancing itself from the joint efforts of the other Central Asian States to collectively counter armed incursions by extremist forces. It is true that these forces do not pose an imminent threat to Turkmenistan.

The Turkmen Government has supported the planned OSCE-UNODCCP regional conference on control of drugs, organized crime and terrorism, however they are opposed to extending the focus of the conference to regional security matters.

The year started with the critical reaction of the OSCE and other members of the international community to the decision of the People's Assembly to give President Niyazov the right to remain in office as long as he wishes. According to the ODIHR statement, this is a serious limitation on the right of the people to freely choose their leaders.

The issue of a memorandum of understanding between the ODIHR and the Government of Turkmenistan remained in abeyance at the beginning of the year, but in mid-March it was revived due to the efforts by the Chairperson-in-Office, the ODIHR, the OSCE Secretary General, Turkmen officials in Vienna and the Centre. As a result of continuous endeavours, discussions took place between the First Deputy Director of the ODIHR and the Director of the National Institute for Democratization during the visit of the Chairperson-in-Office, and the positions of the two sides came closer. Direct contacts between the ODIHR and the relevant Turkmen authorities continued during the visit of heads of OSCE delegations in July. The Turkmen Government and the ODIHR stated their intention to sign a memorandum of understanding at the November Ministerial Meeting in Vienna.

During the year, the Centre received mixed messages from Turkmen officials concerning democratization and human rights. New legislation was introduced in the field of criminal procedure that had the stated intention of strengthening citizens' rights *vis à vis* the law enforcement agencies.

In 2000, there was only one case of arrest for political reasons, that of opposition activist Nurberdy Nurmamedov at the beginning of the year. The situation of small religious communities did not deteriorate in 2000. The Centre intervened successfully in a number of individual cases, although many remained unresolved.

The number of functioning non-governmental organizations at the grass-roots level continued to grow, although none was able to register with the Ministry of Justice. The Centre continued to maintain active contacts with numerous NGOs. Many groups complained about harassment by the Turkmen authorities. Turkmenistan's oldest registered NGO, the Dashoguz Ecological Club, lost its registration, apparently as the result of a series of articles on official corruption.

In addition to long-standing shortcomings in the human dimension sphere (non-implementation of laws meeting international standards, harassment of small religious groups and NGOs, extremely low standard of the information media and lack of transparency, weakness of the rule of law), new problems arose in 2000. All private Internet providers were shut down, thereby creating a government monopoly on access to information by electronic means. Citizens were prohibited from holding accounts in foreign banks. Restrictions were placed on access to higher education, and restrictions based on ethnic origin and language knowledge were placed on access to government jobs. Many people lost their homes without compensation in the course of the reconstruction of the capital. The Centre raised these issues with the competent Turkmen authorities, who in many cases proved constructive partners in discussing matters, but who have been unable to rectify the problems.

The Centre and the UNHCR office in Ashgabad have been awarded a substantial grant by the British Foreign Office to conduct human rights courses in January 2001. Some other small projects in this sphere are in preparation with the agreement of the Turkmen authorities.

It is in the environmental sphere that the Turkmen Government has shown the greatest co-operation with the OSCE. The Centre organized a regional workshop on the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in May. The other organizers of the project were the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), with the financial support of Austria, Norway and Denmark. The Turkmen Government rendered comprehensive assistance to the workshop.

In general, the Turkmen Government's co-operation with respect to OSCE events in the economic and environmental dimension, such as the Economic Forum in Prague and regional seminars, has been good. On the basis of previous results, the Centre plans to hold further events related to the Aarhus Convention, with Austrian financial support.

The Centre maintains close relations with environmental NGOs which are carrying out very positive activities within the country.

1.21 OSCE Centre in Bishkek

The OSCE Centre in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, was established pursuant to Permanent Council decision No. 245 of 23 July 1998, and deployed in January 1999. Since then, the Centre has been acting in conformity with its mandate aimed at realizing the conditions required for Kyrgyzstan's further integration into the OSCE community. This applies to all three main dimensions of the OSCE: the political and military aspects for maintenance of peace and stability, the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and economic and environmental co-operation.

On 29 April 2000, the Centre opened a field office in Osh, which acts as a co-ordination point for OSCE activities in southern Kyrgyzstan. This has become especially appropriate in the light of the fragile security situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

The Centre maintained an active dialogue with all levels of Kyrgyz society, from the officials at the highest levels of the central Government to local authorities, the parliament, academic and research institutions, NGOs, the business community, international organizations and diplomatic representations, cultural institutions, artists, etc.

Regarding political development in Kyrgyzstan during the reporting period, it can be noted that the process of democratization did not move forward as smoothly as Kyrgyzstan's reputation as an island of democracy would have implied. Furthermore, political life was affected by regional problems with Kyrgyzstan's neighbours, as well as by regional co-operation in solving other common problems such as the incursions by armed groups on the national territories of Central Asian republics. During the reporting period, both parliamentary and presidential elections were held in the country. The OSCE concluded that the parliamentary elections were not conducted fully in the spirit of OSCE commitments. The pre-election campaigning periods were marred by inappropriate influence and actions by the power structures. Freedom of the media was not openly restricted, but in several cases actions by local authorities effectively prevented some media from maintaining their usual operations.

Following the visit of the OSCE Secretary General to Bishkek in March 2000, the Government and opposition in general agreed on a national round table. The Centre initiated a series of preparatory sensitization meetings with the aim of facilitating the organization of such a round table. Finally, in June, it became obvious that it could not be organized in the original spirit of the OSCE, and the Centre thereafter participated only as an observer in an event organized by the Government

Kyrgyzstan's commitment to OSCE principles was put to the test when several court cases were opened against some opposition leaders and other people viewed by the power structures as their opponents. The most striking was the case against Kulov, the chairman of one of the strongest opposition parties, and a serious contender for the presidency. He was arrested

following the parliamentary elections, in which he would have won a seat if there had not been serious disputes regarding the counting of votes in his constituency. He was kept in prison for four months, finally tried in a closed military court and then released. This exemplifies the manner in which prospective prominent opposition candidates are marginalized. All these incidents and trends have significantly increased the Centre's involvement in observing the process and advising the actors, and its workload has as a result grown significantly.

In the light of the general trends in political developments in Kyrgyzstan, the Centre was increasingly active in promoting the country's endeavours to fulfill its commitments as one of the OSCE participating States. Priority was assigned to activities in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and close co-operation was maintained with the ODIHR, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner for National Minorities.

During the year, the Centre organized several high-level OSCE visits to Kyrgyzstan. The Chairperson-in-Office led a large delegation that visited Bishkek in May/June, and a delegation of OSCE Ambassadors from the Permanent Missions of participating States in Vienna visited Kyrgyzstan in mid-July as part of a trip to the Central Asian region. The Secretary General visited Kyrgyzstan three times in 2000, and during one of these visits attended the opening of the Osh field office. Visits by the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media also took place. The President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan received all the above delegations. Further assistance was rendered to representatives of the ODIHR, during their needs assessment missions and election observation operations.

Implementing the task of facilitating exchanges of information between the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE, the Centre distributed documents on OSCE governing bodies' deliberations and decisions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Office of the President, as well as to other government offices. Similarly, documentation was distributed on elections, human rights and reports of various OSCE meetings.

As a follow-up to the discussions with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Centre, together with the Kyrgyz Union of Journalists, started planning for a regional conference on the state of the media in Central Asia. The conference is expected to bring together journalists, relevant government officials and representatives and specialists of the OSCE and other specialized international organizations to discuss major problems and possibilities for improvement of regional co-operation relating to the media.

The Centre continued delivering assistance provided by the ODIHR to the Government of Kyrgyzstan, in reviewing its domestic laws and in bringing them into conformity with international standards, as contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), both of which have been ratified by Kyrgyzstan. During the reporting period, both CEDAW and UNCAT experts undertook missions to evaluate the degree of compliance of the national legislation with international standards, and to assess the national mechanisms for implementation of the legislation and the Government's policy in these fields. A conference on ways to ensure compliance of the Kyrgyz legislation with UNCAT was organized in May.

As requested by the Kyrgyz Government, OSCE/ODIHR experts continued advising relevant authorities on the elaboration of the Ombudsman law. The OSCE/ODIHR comments on the latest draft of this law were submitted to the Government in May. The Centre has provided assistance in the co-ordination of activities and in the establishment and maintenance

of contacts with the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, and with the Office of the President.

The Centre is preparing a project for the University in Osh on training of law students in general criminal law and related international standards and in skills to enable them to act as advocates in criminal cases in courts and to provide legal advice and assistance to citizens. The implementation of this project is expected to start in early 2001 with the support of the OSCE field office in Osh.

In order to develop new networks for women activists and to enhance general awareness relating to gender equality in Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE/ODIHR initiated a project on women's leadership and advocacy. This training project, which is also expected to increase the capacity of women leaders to lobby for empowerment and equal opportunities, is being implemented in co-operation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung of Germany. It includes seven three-day training courses in various locations, and a national gender workshop is scheduled to conclude the training in November. A project on trafficking in women and children is being implemented in order to define and quantify the current and potential occurrence of trafficking in women and children in Kyrgyzstan. An assessment will also be made of the existing policy, legislation and other existing mechanisms for the prevention and combating of trafficking. The final report will be prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in consultation and co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, the ODIHR, and the Kyrgyz Government.

OSCE assistance is being rendered to the Border Guard Service of Kyrgyzstan in training the guards in institutional reforms, and in introducing human rights legal issues into the guards' training curriculum. A needs assessment mission was undertaken by the ODIHR in March, followed by a visit by a Kyrgyz delegation to the Polish Border Guards Academy in June. A workshop on human rights is planned for October. OSCE experts and experienced local officers will act as resource persons and trainers.

The Centre is helping the Government to develop a conceptual and legal basis for a population registration mechanism that conforms to the international standards on equality and non-discrimination. In co-operation with a local NGO, the Bishkek Migration Management Centre (BMMC), the ODIHR is planning to prepare a comparative analysis of legislation and governmental policies in the Central Asian republics by the end of 2000.

In connection with the parliamentary elections held on 20 February and 12 March, two local experts, previously trained by the OSCE, conducted ten one-day seminars in the Chui and Talas regions, where 500 rural citizens were trained in voting procedures, observation guidelines and women's potential in politics. This ODIHR-supported project was implemented with the Centre's assistance.

The first national NGO conference of Kyrgyzstan was organized in Bishkek in July, with the support of the Centre. The conference was jointly financed by the OSCE/ODIHR, the World Bank, the Soros Foundation, the Counterpart Consortium, the US Democracy Commission Small Grants Program and Dutch Interchurch Aid. There were 172 NGOs from all over Kyrgyzstan participating in the two-day event of lively discussions on relations between the State and NGOs, the role of NGOs during elections and future perspectives for NGO activities in Kyrgyzstan.

A summer course on human rights and international law was organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and co-financed by the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), from 14 to 27 August. The objective of this

training event was to provide intensive human rights and legal training to law students at the most advanced level and young professionals, to make them proficient in using the legal instruments to deal with various human rights situations. There were 36 participants from all over the Commonwealth of Independent States, and from the Central Asian republics. The Centre was actively involved in the selection of participants.

In the field of economic and environmental activities, the Centre devoted considerable time and efforts to preparing the Kyrgyz representatives for the Eighth Economic Forum, held in Prague in April. A Kyrgyz delegation participated in two preparatory seminars, and four government and two NGO representatives attended the Forum. The Centre conducted two follow-up events for participants in the preparatory seminars and the Forum itself. In addition, the Centre intends to continue co-operating with this influential sector of Kyrgyz society, in information-sharing and opinion-generation.

This year, the Centre has been responsible for the execution of four small-scale projects in the environmental dimension, funded by the Government of Finland and implemented by local NGOs. These projects aim at increasing public awareness of environmental issues and ecological problems. A specific target group was chosen, which includes school children, university students and young researchers. One project is assisting a local environmental NGO in publishing two monthly environmental magazines.

The Centre has also actively supported the Kyrgyz authorities and NGOs in their efforts to solve the mainly regional problems of water management and energy distribution. Kyrgyzstan is in favour of OSCE involvement in organizing a high-level forum at which Central Asian leaders will be able to discuss water and energy issues. The Centre, in various ways, helped Kyrgyz representatives to participate in conferences and seminars relating to these issues. It has initiated the establishment of a mechanism for sharing of information between national NGOs, the Government and the donor community, to make it possible to take full advantage of available information on water and energy issues.

2. OSCE Assistance in the Implementation of Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

2.1 The OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners

During the reporting period, the OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners continued to follow and participate in the Commission's work of making recommendations on the issuing of residence permits to former Russian military personnel and their dependants.

Now, six years after the establishment of the Commission, all requests for residence permits have passed through the Commission's initial review. Most of the applications have been conclusively dealt with, and at present about 15,000 retired military and family members hold temporary residence permits in Estonia. Of these, approximately 12,800 individuals have five-years residence permits.

About 2,500 applicants have been issued short-term residence permits, for periods ranging from only six months to up to three years. Often, this has to do with the relevant legislation, for example, the curtailment of permits for certain categories of former servicemen.

Another important reason is sometimes to give the Government more time to investigate problematic cases, where there might be questions about the applicant's background, or where he may have provided insufficient information.

Most of the six-month permits have been granted to people who are beneficiaries of US apartment programmes for resettlement of former officers to Russia. An increasing number of these persons had applied for residence permits in Estonia, although they were supposed to leave the country and occupy the housing assigned to them.

So far, the Commission has dealt with approximately 30,000 applications, including those for extension of permits already issued. In 2000, there were 66 refusals.

The procedures for handling applications for residence permits in the future have been revamped. Under the new arrangements in respect of foreign ex-military personnel, there will be two streams, one for routine cases, for example, renewal of five-year residence permits, which will be the responsibility of the Department for Migration and Citizenship, and the other for all non-routine problem cases, such as refusals, initial applications and requests for permanent residence, which will continue to be the responsibility of the Government Commission with OSCE participation. A Government decree to this effect drafted in April 2000 has yet to be issued.

In order to streamline work and adjust to the new working procedures, the Commission will have to be re-staffed and re-organized. A Government order authorizing the new structure is urgently required to formalize these arrangements. Furthermore, amendments to the Law on Aliens intended to facilitate work with certain categories of military pensioners still have to pass the National Parliament.

On balance, satisfactory headway has been made in accomplishing routine tasks, but work with unusual and problematic cases has slowed down, and such cases are not likely to be resolved in the near future.

2.2 Article II of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During the reporting period, the implementation of the Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), known as the Vienna Agreement, continued successfully. Implementation of inspections and visits to weapons manufacturing facilities was completed satisfactorily and only minor discrepancies were discovered. A total of 26 OSCE countries have offered support by providing assistants to the inspections led by the Parties and to the five inspections led by the OSCE. A total of 11 inspections were conducted during this period, expending 23 quotas. Moreover, in the reporting period, an amendment to the Protocol on Visits to Weapons Manufacturing Facilities was approved by the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), and a total of three visits were conducted. All this involved the participation of 29 assistants from 15 OSCE countries. Various OSCE countries offered training courses for inspectors, as well as for the personnel of the verification centres of the two Entities, and support was offered to improve their communication and computer equipment. Both verification centres are functioning very well, and the inspectors have attained a remarkable degree of professionalism.

On 15 December 1999, information exchange showed clear improvement, although some problems still remained unresolved, in particular, regarding the notification of police forces at the canton level in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), which in the intermediate exchange valid as of 15 June 2000, for the first time covered all ten cantons. The figures for employees in the FBiH Ministry of the Interior forces are now also included. In this context, it is important to point out that, according to the FBiH contribution to the information exchange, the police forces do not belong to the armed forces.

The problem of the head of the delegation of the FBiH to the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) as well as to the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission (SRCC), has been temporarily solved by a decision by the Prime Minister. The relevant authorities of the FBiH are considering adopting a rotational system similar to that adopted by the State delegation of BiH, which could satisfy both components of the Federation.

The programme of military contacts and co-operation (1999) was blocked this past autumn because of divergent views between the Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence of the FBiH regarding the allocation of slots for various events. The Bosniak component argued for a ratio of 2.3 : 1, while the Bosnian Croats wanted a ratio of 1 : 1. A package deal regarding the division of the available slots for activities in 2000 was informally agreed on between the Personal Representative and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence of the FBiH. The package deal included a division of the quota according to a variable ratio depending on the nature of the activity. However, a formal agreement has not yet been reached. The problem has so far been solved pragmatically, although some activities have had to be postponed.

Denmark continued to support the aerial observation regime by providing equipment and training, and an experimental flight was conducted in April. A second flight took place between 7 and 13 October with support provided by both Denmark and the Czech Republic. A protocol on aerial observation has been drafted and submitted to the JCC for approval.

The United Kingdom offered support by providing financial experts who are working with the two ministries of defence of the entities in an effort to increase the transparency of the budgets. In particular, efforts will be made to improve the data exchange on 15 March 2000. The financial experts are focusing on outlays for 1999, on foreign military assistance in 1999 and on the budget authorization for 2000. A working group was created by the JCC and consists of the experts from the United Kingdom and representatives from the OSCE and the two entities. The working group had free access to the ministries of defence of both entities. This is a clear sign of progress, indicating increasing mutual trust and co-operation. The working group met again in late September, however, an audit of the budgets of the two ministries of defence has not yet taken place.

At the meeting of the JCC on 15 December 1999, the parties adopted a programme of voluntary activities for the year 2000. Of particular significance was an offer by the Italian Government to host a two-week field exercise for a joint battalion from Bosnia and Herzegovina. This exercise required BiH to take a decision regarding a military chain of command and control at both the State level and the joint unit levels, providing BiH with an opportunity to implement the declaration made by the members of the Joint Presidency in New York last November. However, this exercise was cancelled due to a last-minute reluctance on the part of one of the parties.

The movement of the General Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska from Bijeljina to Banja Luka has caused problems for the Military Liaison Mission of the Federation (Bosniak component), since there is a lack of adequate housing in Banja Luka. Until that issue has been

resolved, the Military Liaison Missions are operating only during normal working hours. The Ministry of Defence of RS is obliged to provide adequate accommodation and has requested international support.

A number of activities deriving from Measure XI (Programme of Military Contacts and Co-operation) took place during this period. A workshop on disaster response preparedness was conducted by the Austrians in Teslic (RS) from 12 to 15 March. Furthermore, a workshop on military budget was held on 13 and 14 June, followed by a seminar on military budget transparency on 29 and 30 June; both events took place in Sarajevo. With support from Germany, four code of conduct seminars were held in Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka and Tuzla. In addition, three workshops for journalists were held in Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka. Training for inspectors/assistants was offered by the NATO school in Oberammergau, Germany. Austria and France provided Vienna Document training for BiH representatives. Austria provided assistance in drafting the VD 99 information exchange for BiH for the year 2000. However, the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM) has yet to approve the document.

The Inter-University Steering Committee on Security Studies of BiH (CSS) is functioning satisfactorily. In the reporting period, six research projects were finalized. A private Italian company provided computers (including both hardware and software) to the universities, allowing for Internet access and providing an indirect network. Training courses are planned. Co-operation with the Marshall Center, foundations, Institutions of the OSCE and NGOs is progressing. Some universities in the Stability Pact countries will be involved in the research projects planned for 2000. Full or partial sponsorship is welcome, through the CSS or directly with the university concerned.

From 11 to 13 February, a seminar on the State dimension of security was held in Sarajevo with financial support from Italy and the United Kingdom. In addition, Switzerland, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Italy provided experts to the seminar. The large RS delegation (both from the University of Banja Luka and from the Ministry of Defence) is worthy of note.

As a joint effort by the two local universities and the OSCE, a second seminar took place on 25 and 26 September in Mostar. However, political difficulties regarding co-operation between the two universities (one Croat and the other Bosniak) had to be overcome. Ambassador Istvan Gyarmati, from the Institute of East-West Studies in New York, has agreed to be the Chairman of the Scientific Committee which oversees the inter-university security studies programme in BiH. The Committee is composed of 12 international experts, plus one representative from each of the six BiH universities. In July, the CSS approved another eight research projects; however, the research plans for these projects still need to be approved by the Scientific Committee.

2.3 Article IV of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control

In the reporting period, the implementation of the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control, known as the Florence Agreement, continued, in spite of the turbulence caused when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) temporarily suspended participation because of the Kosovo crisis and the fact that its delegation was not invited to the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) meeting in Brussels in the spring. On this latter occasion, Republika Srpska (RS)

also suspended participation out of solidarity with the FRY and based on their assertion that the Florence Agreement could not be implemented unless all the parties were actively participating. Both the FRY and RS resumed participation in late July.

Clear improvement in compliance with the Protocol on Notifications was demonstrated at the 15 December 1999 information exchange, and in 2000 all the inspections have been conducted, except for the two scheduled for BiH (one in Croatia and one in the FRY). In fact, the BiH authorities were unable to decide on the composition of the inspection teams. A total of 14 inspections were conducted, expending 28 quota inspections, and involving 44 assistants from 25 OSCE countries.

In the reporting period, the Personal Representative continued to encourage the parties to consider ways in which to decrease the amount of armaments exempted by the Agreement and also to contemplate multilateral or unilateral reductions. However, so far no decision has been reached by the parties. Under the chairmanship of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the parties to the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control met in Vienna on 2-3 November 2000 to hold the second conference to review the implementation of this agreement. The parties expressed satisfaction with the implementation process and agreed to consider measures that would enhance implementation in the future, and contribute to transparency and openness.

The Personal Representative also continued to encourage the parties to conduct "undeclared site" inspections. The parties have taken this into consideration, but no such inspections have been conducted to date.

During the reporting period, the destruction of equipment continued. With the support of a team of Franco-German experts, Republika Srpska destroyed 106 pieces of equipment and the Federation destroyed 48. This demonstrates the willingness of the parties to fully meet their obligations under the Florence Agreement.

2.4 Article V of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Negotiations on regional stability in South-East Europe under Article V of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During the year, the participating States of Article V have continued discussions on confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and have also initiated discussions on information exchange on military forces. These discussions progressed throughout the year and will develop measures that will improve security in the region.

The recent changes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia open a window of opportunity for Article V, notably with the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the OSCE and the Vienna Document. Article V negotiations are now in the process of being reassessed and possibly adjusted to the new situation. They will be continued with the goal of being concluded as soon as possible.

The security and defence sub-table of the Working Table on Security Issues and Article V are complementary to each other. Article V lays foundations for an important aspect of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

3. Regional Activities of the OSCE

3.1 The OSCE Regional Strategy and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

The OSCE attaches great importance to the objective of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe to achieve lasting peace, prosperity and stability through a comprehensive and coherent approach in the region, involving all the different actors. Based on the OSCE's comparative strengths – the expertise of the OSCE Missions in the field and of the OSCE Institutions working on relevant issues – the OSCE has made and continues to make an important contribution towards implementing this goal. The OSCE has also emphasized the importance of civil society and encouraged the involvement of NGOs in the Stability Pact with a view to building local capacities.

At the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the Heads of State or Government welcomed the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and stressed the key role of the OSCE. In the Istanbul Summit Declaration, the Permanent Council was tasked “to develop a regional strategy to support its aims”, and on 16 March 2000, the Permanent Council adopted Decision No. 344, on a regional strategy for South Eastern Europe. Under the OSCE regional strategy, projects have been developed based on the expertise of the OSCE Missions in the region. These projects address issues transcending national borders, with the objective of encouraging co-operation among different OSCE Missions and of supporting the aims of the Stability Pact.

The OSCE has actively participated in the meetings of the three working tables of the Stability Pact and the relevant task forces, and in the Regional Funding Conference, which was held in Brussels on 29 and 30 March 2000. The Organization has also co-operated with the structures of the Stability Pact as well as with international organizations engaged in activities in the context of the Stability Pact. Senior Pact officials and the chairs of the task forces have addressed the OSCE and held bilateral meetings with OSCE officials. For instance, the Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Bodo Hombach, reported to the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, and to the Permanent Council in Vienna on 20 January 2000; the Chair of Working Table III on Security Issues reported to the Permanent Council on 17 February and 19 October 2000; and the Chair of Working Table I on Democratization and Human Rights met with senior OSCE officials on 27 June.

The OSCE was assigned the lead on particular task forces of the working tables of the Stability Pact, such as the Task Force on Gender under Working Table I and the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings under Working Table III; the Chairperson-in-Office is chairing the informal working group on military contacts of Working Table III.

The priorities of the *Task Force on Gender*, led by the OSCE, were to promote the participation of women in political life by increasing their political representation in parliament, to reform electoral legislation, to build capacity and to strengthen national machinery for the promotion of gender equality. Focal points consisting of representatives both of governments and of NGOs have been established in the countries of the region. The Chair of the Task Force, Sonja Lokar of Slovenia, Executive Director of the Central and East European Network for Gender Issues, submitted a detailed action plan containing both regional and national projects which are currently being implemented. The Task Force was established on the basis of an initiative by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has continued to support the Chair, for instance by establishing a gender task force clearing house in Sarajevo in May.

During the reporting period, the OSCE also led the *Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings*. In the light of the work undertaken by the OSCE (especially the ODIHR and, increasingly, some of the Missions), the Chairperson-in-Office encouraged regional co-operation in the context of the Stability Pact. Internal OSCE meetings of representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office, the ODIHR, the Balkan Missions and the Conflict Prevention Centre within the OSCE Secretariat were held on 15 March and 20 June. The participants in these meetings discussed current and planned activities and developed recommendations for future action in South-Eastern Europe. On 1 June, the Chairperson-in-Office seconded the former Austrian Minister for Women's Issues, Helga Konrad, to the ODIHR to serve as the ODIHR Co-ordinator for Trafficking Issues and as the Chair of the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings. On the eve of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Trafficking in Human Beings, which took place on 19 June, the Chairperson-in-Office convened a first meeting with other international organizations working on this issue in South-Eastern Europe to exchange information and co-ordinate efforts in the context of the Task Force.

An inaugural meeting of the Task Force took place in Vienna on 18 September 2000. All the participants (OSCE participating States, OSCE Institutions, OSCE Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, NGOs) welcomed the opportunity to discuss this issue and supported the recommendations embodied in the draft action plan, designed to bring about a coherent and co-operative approach among the countries of origin, transit and destination. The following seven areas of concern are identified in dealing with this issue: awareness-raising, training, law enforcement, victim protection, return and reintegration, legislative reform and socio-economic causes. A South-Eastern European ministerial meeting on trafficking is envisaged, at which ministers representing the countries of the region may adopt or sign a declaration on future action to combat trafficking in human beings. It was decided to have two Task Force meetings each year, the next one to be held in March 2001.

With regard to other areas where the OSCE has particular expertise, such as national minorities, the administration of justice, human rights institutions and the media, it is co-operating with other organizations in the relevant task forces. For instance, the HCNM was chairing the Task Force on Human Rights and National Minorities until this spring, and the ODIHR has been involved in issues relating to Roma and Sinti. Regarding the important issue of refugee return, representatives from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE Mission to Croatia, as well as the Conflict Prevention Centre, have participated in and contributed to the relevant meetings. The OSCE has also contributed to the development of the Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative and to the Stability Pact Fight-Against-Organized-Crime Initiative.

Seven of the projects proposed under the OSCE Regional Strategy for South-Eastern Europe and by OSCE Institutions were accepted for inclusion in the list of quick-start projects presented to the Regional Funding Conference in March. The OSCE projects are currently at different stages of implementation, with implementation depending to some extent on transfer of the funds pledged.

In addition to the OSCE-led projects, there are projects which have been initiated by OSCE Missions or Institutions and which, in some cases, are being undertaken jointly with the Council of Europe. The projects are based on the practical experience of the OSCE on the ground and aim at involving and strengthening local capacities. These projects are summarized below.

A regional association of election officials was proposed by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina based on the experience of the Association of Election Officials of Bosnia and

Herzegovina. The objective was to provide a mutual support network for electoral officials throughout the region with a view to supporting and strengthening independence and professionalism among election officials. A substantive preparatory meeting was held in April.

A *regional legal aid network* has been initiated by the OSCE Mission to Croatia with the objective of ensuring access to the courts and justice for economically disadvantaged individuals, thereby contributing to the protection of human rights. An initial meeting of representatives of other OSCE Missions, participating States, intergovernmental organizations, potential donors and selected domestic NGOs was held in December 1999.

A *regional legislative website* was planned jointly by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe to serve as a reference and research tool for legislators, government officials, lawyers and NGOs for their legislative and other work. The website will contain texts of and comments on legislation, as well as international instruments to serve as tools for the development of new laws, in order to ensure that they are in conformity with European human rights and criminal law standards. Planning meetings between the OSCE, the ODIHR and the Council of Europe were held with a view to launching the website. Preliminary studies were prepared. The OSCE CiO (Austria) transferred EUR 35,000 to the ODIHR in order to better facilitate the initial implementation of this project before the end of 2000.

Based on the ODIHR's assistance programmes to prison services in the form of training and study visits in Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia undertaken since 1997, a *prison service reform project in countries and regions of South-Eastern Europe* is being implemented by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe, with an increasing emphasis on regional co-operation aiming to include the Montenegrin and other prison services in the programme. The same amount of EUR 35,000 has been transferred to the ODIHR through the OSCE Secretariat, upon instructions by the donor country, Austria (OSCE CiO).

A consulting mission to Croatia and an assessment visit to Montenegro have taken place.

In the context of Working Table III (Sub-Table: Defence and Security Affairs) a seminar on structures of armed forces in multi-ethnic States is being prepared by the OSCE Chairmanship, and is to be held before the end of 2000.

During the meeting of the Working Table I on Democratization and Human Rights, which took place in Bucharest on 26-27 October 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was welcomed as a new member of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The participation of the FRY will certainly give the Stability Pact its complete dimension. On 10 November 2000 the OSCE accepted the FRY as one of its participating States during a special session of the Permanent Council in Vienna and will seek to involve the FRY in the work of all the above mentioned projects it is currently leading under the umbrella of the Pact.

3.2 The Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia

On 15 January 2000, the OSCE Secretary General Ján Kubiš was appointed by the then Chairman-in-Office, Wolfgang Schüssel, as the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Central Asia (PR/CA). The PR/CA performs his task under the guidance of the Chairmanship, on the basis of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the recommendations contained in the report prepared by Ambassador Hönyck. His activities during the reporting period are described below.

The PR/CA travelled to all five countries of Central Asia. The visits usually included talks with senior government officials, Ambassadors of OSCE participating States, and representatives of international organizations and the local civil society. On 2 and 3 February, the PR/CA visited Tajikistan, where he met with President Rakhmonov and Foreign Minister Nazarov. On 4 February, he visited Uzbekistan, in his capacity as Secretary General, for working consultations with Foreign Minister Nazarov. On 28 and 29 February, he visited Turkmenistan, where he was received by President Niyazov, and met with Foreign Minister Shikmuradov. On 14 March, he paid a visit to Kazakhstan, where he met with President Nazarbaev, Prime Minister Tokaev and Foreign Minister Idrisov. A day later, on 15 March, he visited Kyrgyzstan to meet with President Akaev and Foreign Minister Imanaliev. There, he also met with the opposition leaders, Mr. Kulov and Mr. Usenov.

On 24 February, the PR/CA met in Vienna with President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan, who addressed the Permanent Council. On 23 March, Foreign Minister Imanaliev of Kyrgyzstan visited the PR/CA in Vienna. On the margins of the Eighth Economic Forum, which took place from 11 to 14 April, the PR/CA met with President Rakhmonov of Tajikistan.

At the invitation of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, from 26 to 28 April, the PR/CA attended the first Eurasian Economic Summit, which was held in the framework of the World Economic Forum and was supported by Kazakhstan. He moderated one of the workshops, on actions to implement regional stability and integration. Together with other heads of delegation, he was received twice by President Nazarbayev, and took the opportunity for informal discussions with senior representatives of the Central Asian States and Russia. The Eurasian Economic Summit was also used for consultations with senior representatives of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Developments.

After a separate meeting with President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the PR/CA travelled on 28 April to Kyrgyzstan, together with Prime Minister Muraliev and Foreign Minister Imanaliev. On 29 April they inaugurated the OSCE field office in Osh. In Bishkek the PR/CA also met a group of opposition political parties, NGOs and representatives from the media.

From 28 May to 2 June, the PR/CA accompanied Chairperson-in-Office Ferrero-Waldner on her visit to all five countries of Central Asia.

On 14 and 15 June, in Washington, the PR/CA attended, as an observer, a Conference on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Central Asia. The Conference heard presentations by representatives of Central Asian States on counter-terrorism in the region and by experts from other countries, and also heard information from Russia and the United States about counter-terrorism diplomacy in the United Nations and G-8 contexts. The participants stressed that centres of international terrorism had moved from the Middle East eastward, and that international terrorism was increasingly looking for shelter in disintegrating or weak States.

On 30 June, the PR/CA attended the Crans Montana Forum in Switzerland, where he chaired a session on looking toward the Caucasus and Central Asia: security issues, economy and the natural resources challenge, and took part in a panel on rehabilitation of the multi-ethnic society.

On 18 July, the PR/CA convened an information-sharing meeting of international organizations, international financial institutions and major bilateral agencies in Vienna. The meeting, which had the primary aim of providing a forum for the exchange of information,

focused mainly on regional co-operation and aspects of security in Central Asia. The invitation was accepted by senior working-level representatives of some 15 international partners, representing various agencies of the UN family, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the International Organizations for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and major bilateral agencies. Already earlier this year, on 28 March, the PR/CA had organized a meeting of OSCE Institutions focusing on Central Asia in Vienna, for the purpose of exchanging information on activities within the various structures of the Organization.

The PR/CA also attended and contributed to the International Conference on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: An Integrated Approach to Counter Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism, which took place on 19 and 20 October in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The Conference was organized by the Vienna-based UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, and was supported by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship. It was hosted and supported by the Government of Uzbekistan.

During the recent crisis in Central Asia, caused by the attempts of some militant groups, allegedly linked with the so-called "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", to infiltrate into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in August and September 2000, the PR/CA was in regular contact with senior representatives of the Governments of the affected States to discuss the situation.

III. OSCE Institutions

1. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

1.1 Introduction

Guided by the conviction that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law represent an essential precondition for stability and security in each participating State as well as in the OSCE area as a whole, a principle that has been reaffirmed in the OSCE Charter for European Security, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) continued its democratization and election-observation programmes in 2000. After several years marked by steady expansion, the ODIHR started, with the beginning of 2000, to concentrate increasingly on consolidating its programmes in these fields, to refine its projects and to focus on ensuring proper follow-up, while retaining its flexibility.

1.2 Elections

1.2.1 Election observation

The conduct of a transparent, free, fair and accountable election process in accordance with established legislation is fundamental to a democratic society. Therefore, the observation of elections in OSCE participating States remained one of the key components of the ODIHR's work in the past year. The ODIHR continued to apply its carefully developed methodology, which provides an in-depth insight into all elements of the electoral process before, during and after election day. The ODIHR deployed long-term observation missions, and provided support

to OSCE field missions to evaluate elections when an observation or assessment was not possible. Taking into account the importance of democratic structures at local level for the establishment of democracy, the ODIHR in 2000 stepped up its efforts to observe municipal elections in a number of OSCE States.

Since December 1999, the ODIHR has observed the parliamentary elections in Croatia (2 and 3 January), Tajikistan (27 February) Kyrgyzstan (20 February and 12 March), and Azerbaijan (5 November), and the presidential elections in Croatia (24 January and 7 February), the Russian Federation (26 March), Georgia (9 April), and in Kyrgyzstan (29 October); and early municipal elections in Montenegro (11 June), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (10 September) and Albania (1 October). In addition, the ODIHR conducted a limited evaluation of the April 2000 referendum in Ukraine. The parliamentary elections in Turkmenistan on 12 December 1999 and the presidential election in Uzbekistan on 9 January 2000 were not observed by the ODIHR because of the absence of a credible choice available to voters. The ODIHR also deployed a technical assessment mission for the parliamentary elections in Belarus (15 October).

Following each observation mission, a final report was produced outlining the degree to which the election process met OSCE commitments, detailing concerns, and making recommendations on how to improve the process for future elections.

During observation missions, the ODIHR co-operated closely with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as well as with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament in order to ensure that the international community delivered a clear and consistent message in its electoral assessments.

1.2.2 Technical election assistance

Following recommendations made in final observation reports, or in the framework of memoranda of understanding signed with the Governments of participating States, the ODIHR undertook an increasing number of technical assistance projects in preparation for elections. In this context, the decision of the OSCE Istanbul Summit (18 and 19 November 1999) to commit participating States to follow up on ODIHR recommendations in the field of elections is of particular importance.*

The ODIHR devoted substantial energy and resources to the development and implementation of technical assistance projects intended to improve the electoral processes before or after an election. Technical election-assistance projects undertaken by the ODIHR included legislative assistance such as the organization of expert meetings or the development of comments on electoral legislation. In addition, the ODIHR conducted voter education, political-party and domestic-observer training projects, and took part in round tables on election-related issues. Since December 1999, ODIHR has released comments on the electoral legislation of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In Kazakhstan, the ODIHR, the OSCE PA and the OSCE Centre in Almaty started to organize a series of four round tables on the electoral framework with the participation of the

* “With a large number of elections ahead of us, we are committed to these being free and fair, and in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments. This is the only way in which there can be a stable basis for democratic development. We appreciate the role of the ODIHR in assisting countries to develop electoral legislation in keeping with OSCE principles and commitments, and we agree to follow up promptly ODIHR’s election assessments and recommendations.” (paragraph 26 of the OSCE 1999 Istanbul Summit Declaration).

Government, the parliament and all the political forces and civil society. Based on the recommendations contained in the ODIHR final report on the 1999 parliamentary elections, the round tables are examining the current legislative framework for elections and suggesting improvements.

The ODIHR developed and implemented domestic-observer training programmes for core trainers and representatives of NGOs in all six regions of Kyrgyzstan (November-December 1999). The project produced manuals for domestic observers and trainers published in both the Kyrgyz and the Russian languages.

As part of a joint ODIHR-European Commission programme for Belarus, the ODIHR, in co-operation with the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) in Belarus, in June and August 2000, conducted two training workshops for representatives of all the political parties. The training covered basic campaign techniques and campaign organization.

Another project implemented by the ODIHR was aimed at developing clear and consistent procedures for resolving election disputes. In the autumn of 2000, the ODIHR released a handbook entitled, "Resolving Election Disputes in the OSCE Area: Towards a Standard Election Disputes Monitoring System."

In July, the ODIHR convened a workshop in Warsaw to discuss the implementation of the Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) ("Lund Recommendations"). The main objective of the workshop, which was organized in co-operation with International IDEA, was to formulate a first set of concrete guidelines for experts when addressing national minorities' concerns during ODIHR election-related activities, and to provide guidance to national minorities on public participation in elections.

The recommendations emerging from election observation missions have been of critical importance to the design of assistance projects. Further co-operation between the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly should aim at strengthening the implementation of recommendations and follow-up missions.

1.3 Assistance to Democratization

The second main area of the ODIHR's activities has been the development and implementation of projects aimed at advancing human rights and democracy by assisting participating States in their efforts to meet OSCE human dimension commitments. For 2000, more than 80 such projects have been developed in the fields of rule of law, prevention of torture, assistance to Ombudsman institutions, migration and freedom of movement, gender equality, trafficking in human beings, freedom of religion and assistance to civil society. In developing its projects, the ODIHR focused in particular on training and raising awareness of human rights provisions in recently adopted national legislation. In addition, the ODIHR continued its grass-roots project initiative to encourage the development of small-scale democratization projects, which are implemented directly by the OSCE field operations, often in co-operation with local NGOs.

Geographically, the activities of the ODIHR focused on Central Asia, the Caucasus and South-Eastern Europe, but projects have also been implemented in a number of other OSCE participating States. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, memoranda of understanding (MoU) signed with most of the governments in these regions provide the framework for ODIHR projects aimed at promoting the rule of law, democratic institutions, democratic elections, civil

society, and human rights. The implementation of these projects remained one of the ODIHR's top priorities.

1.3.1 Rule of Law

The ODIHR was engaged in a wide variety of projects to promote the rule of law in OSCE participating States. These included projects involving the Ombudsman offices or the drafting of Ombudsman laws in Armenia, Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. These projects involved sending experts to conduct staff training and reviewing and discussing the proposed Ombudsman laws with relevant government and non-government actors.

The ODIHR continued its legislative reform assistance in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Projects were also started in Tajikistan and Ukraine to bring domestic laws into conformity with international standards. The ODIHR also established a regional project to review legislation in Central Asia on an as-requested basis.

Training programmes for prison personnel were established or assisted by the ODIHR in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The ODIHR, in partnership with the Association for the Prevention of Torture, began a programme to develop a methodology for NGOs visiting places of detention. A manual is being developed and workshops will be held next year for local NGOs in Central Asia. The ODIHR is developing an alternative sentencing manual in Uzbekistan, in partnership with SOROS/COLPI and the training institute of the Ministry of Interior. The manual will be used to train judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers.

In the field of legal education, the ODIHR started projects to develop legal clinics in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It also conducted projects to train judges, prosecutors, defence lawyers and police in the application of international human rights standards to their work.

1.3.2 Prevention of Torture

Following the meeting of the ODIHR Advisory Panel for the Prevention of Torture during the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the ODIHR continued to implement its programme to combat torture. The Panel continued to provide valuable input and ideas for the ODIHR in its activities to combat torture.

The programme has been largely implemented in the context of the rule of law programme and has included legislative reviews with regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in order to assist participating States to bring their domestic systems into compliance with their international treaty obligations. The ODIHR also worked with prison administrations in the OSCE area, in particular with regard to the establishment of sustainable training structures, taking full cognizance of international standards and best practices. The ODIHR supported the development of new tactics in the fight against torture, and seeks to improve access by civil society to penitentiary systems in order to strengthen civil control over closed establishments as a preventive safeguard against ill-treatment.

1.3.3 Trafficking in human beings

In 2000, the ODIHR continued and initiated several projects to combat trafficking in human beings. These projects aim to raise awareness, to provide technical assistance to governments, to build the capacity of NGOs and to promote greater co-ordination of anti-trafficking efforts between Governments, NGOs and international organizations.

The Adviser on Trafficking Issues and the Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings are actively engaged in advocating relevant government reform and in developing projects in the areas of prevention, protection of victims and prosecution of traffickers. In 2000, the ODIHR has facilitated NGO-Government round tables on trafficking in Montenegro, Russia and Romania. These round tables are the first step in the development of a comprehensive strategic national action plan to combat trafficking.

Furthermore, the ODIHR is also involved in regional efforts to address trafficking in South-Eastern Europe through the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings that was convened for the first time in September 2000.

1.3.4 Civil society/public awareness

The ODIHR continued to conduct assistance projects aimed at developing and strengthening civil society in countries in transition. The ODIHR activities in this field included projects designed to foster dialogue on specific human rights issues between government institutions and civil society by organizing NGO-Government round tables. These meetings proved to be an effective means for discussing sensitive human rights issues and to adopt decisions for follow-up actions.

In Uzbekistan, the ODIHR was involved in organizing a training course on human rights monitoring and reporting for representatives of civil society designed to enhance their skills in preparing accurate and comprehensive reports on the human rights situation in the country.

The ODIHR supported initiatives to foster dialogue between civic groups from conflict areas by organizing training sessions, which brought together groups with common interests and common concerns in the human dimension field.

The ODIHR developed and implemented a programme aimed at promoting awareness of human rights through the dissemination of information on national legislation and international standards. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the ODIHR, jointly with international and local partners, produced a series of radio and TV programmes covering various human rights issues. Local civil society representatives, as well as government representatives and international experts, were invited to contribute to the programmes. In order to disseminate information as broadly as possible, video- and audio-tapes were distributed in schools, prisons and churches, as well as to local newspapers.

1.3.5 Gender

The projects implemented by the ODIHR Gender Unit have been targeted at furthering the equality of women and men in fact and in law, increasing the visibility and influence of

women in politics and governance and addressing human rights abuses and lack of access to government and community structures for women.

Promoting leadership and increasing the role of women in politics and public life is a key area of activity for the ODIHR Gender Unit. Projects have also been conducted to increase legal literacy regarding women's rights, and on the prevention of violence against women, including law enforcement training, legal aid, legal reform and the monitoring of women's rights. Estonian language training has been provided free of charge to non-Estonian women in Estonia to support their integration into society.

In 2000, the Gender Unit has been implementing a total of 15 projects in nine countries (Albania, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan).

1.3.6 Migration and freedom of movement

In the field of migration and freedom of movement, the ODIHR focused on three major areas: the registration of permanent residents, human rights training for border officials, and the problem of internal displacement.

In Armenia, the ODIHR assisted the Government in developing an efficient population registration system. This programme seeks to ensure that a new registration system, replacing the so-called *propiska* system, meets OSCE commitments on freedom of movement and choice of residence and adheres to international standards of non-discrimination. A similar project was also launched in Ukraine. The ODIHR continued to arrange human-rights training for border officials in CIS countries. In 2000, this programme focused on Kyrgyzstan. As a new initiative, the ODIHR organized, in co-operation with the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement and the Norwegian Refugee Council, a Regional Workshop on Internal Displacement in the Southern Caucasus. In September 2000, a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Migration and Internal Displacement was held in Vienna.

1.3.7 Freedom of religion

The Contact Group of the ODIHR Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief met in February 2000 in Warsaw to re-organize its work and identify the topics for its working groups. In 2000, the working groups focused on conflict prevention and dialogue, legislative issues, and education/awareness for tolerance. In May, the ODIHR conducted an Expert Round Table on Tolerance for Ethnic and Religious Groups in Armenia, which concentrated on the issues of tolerance education and public awareness in this field. It also assisted with the development of a law on the status of religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also started to work on a legislative database on freedom of religion or belief, which will include legal and other documents from the OSCE participating States. The Contact Group of the Advisory Panel met again on the margins of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in October to review the progress in the ODIHR's freedom-of-religion activities.

1.3.8 Focus on South-Eastern Europe

The ODIHR implemented a wide range of projects in the region of South-Eastern Europe, including two projects under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the OSCE Regional Strategy. The first project, a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the ODIHR,

provided assistance to the reform of the prison services in Croatia, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, with an emphasis on regional co-operation. The second project focused on the development of a regional legislative website, intended as a reference and research tool for legislators, government officials, lawyers, NGOs and other interested groups. Both projects will be further implemented in 2001.

Other projects and activities in the region concerned the training of police in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, assistance in the field of freedom of religion and belief in Bosnia and Herzegovina, capacity-building in law schools in Albania, as well as projects on gender issues in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on Roma and Sinti and on trafficking issues. Kosovo continued to be an area of special concern for the ODIHR.

The ODIHR Office in Montenegro, reopened in July 1999, continued to operate throughout 2000. With an enhanced staff of five internationals, it was able to expand considerably its assistance to the Montenegrin authorities. The Office was active in all fields of the ODIHR mandate, including elections, legal reform, the strengthening of civil society, trafficking in human beings, municipal assistance and reform, and gender issues. In July 2000, a Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe joined the Office, with a view to advancing the institutional co-operation on the ground between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The Office liaised closely with other international organizations in Montenegro, such as the ECMM, the UNHCR, and the ICRC. It is entirely funded by voluntary contributions.

1.4 Roma and Sinti

The ODIHR has increasingly been at the forefront of international efforts aimed at improving the situation of Roma in the OSCE area, including within the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. This development has been facilitated through the strengthening of the ODIHR Roma and Sinti Contact Point, which now consists of three staff solely devoted to issues relating to Roma and Sinti. In early 2000, the Contact Point started to implement a work programme, which comprises a number of activities designed to assist governments in formulating and implementing more effective national policies on Roma and Sinti. Within the framework of its efforts to promote international consultations among government and Roma leaders on the increasingly contentious issue of Roma refugees and asylum seekers, the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues organized a series of meetings in Skopje, Oslo, Helsinki, Bratislava, Tarnow and Prague. The meetings were part of the preparations for the side meeting on Roma refugees and asylum seekers at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in October.

The Contact Point also facilitated the participation of Roma voters in the election processes in various countries through training programmes, which included printed voters' leaflets targeting the Roma communities.

In Kosovo, the ODIHR, in co-ordination with the OSCE Mission, launched an action plan designed to assist in the re-organization of Roma communities by focusing on democracy- and capacity-building programmes, the dissemination of information in the Romani language and the ensuring of proper representation of Roma in governmental bodies. The ODIHR Contact Point also enhanced its clearing-house function by facilitating exchanges of information among governments, international organizations and NGOs, and intensified its efforts to document and analyse the situation of Roma and Sinti in crisis areas.

1.5 Monitoring of implementation

Following the restructuring of its Monitoring Section, the ODIHR continued to act as a resource to the OSCE on human dimension issues, notably by following and analysing human-rights developments and compliance with OSCE human-dimension commitments by participating States, alerting the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to serious deteriorations in human rights, and making specific recommendations for action. Within the context of its monitoring and activities to support implementation of human-dimension commitments, the ODIHR also contributed to preparing and organizing the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings on Human Rights and Inhuman Treatment or Punishment in March 2000, on Trafficking in Human Beings in June 2000, and on Migration and Internal Displacement in September 2000, as well as the OSCE/ODIHR Seminar on Children and Armed Conflict and the 2000 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held in Warsaw in October 2000.

The ODIHR provided technical support to the Russian Presidential Special Representative for Human Rights in Chechnya, Mr. Vladimir Kalamonov.

Tasked by the participating States to disseminate information on the human dimension, the ODIHR published a number of background papers and handbooks on various human rights and democratization issues, and made this and other information available also on its improved website.

2. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)

2.1 General

In the past year, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Mr. Max van der Stoep, has continued his active engagement with regard to a wide range of subjects in a number of OSCE participating States. His efforts are aimed at identifying and seeking early resolution of tensions involving national minority issues. During the reporting period, he concentrated in particular on the issues described below.

2.2 Croatia

The High Commissioner visited Croatia in mid-November 1999. The main topic of his discussions was the situation of the Serbian minority, especially the problem of the security situation in Eastern Slavonia, refugee return, implementation of the Amnesty Law and amendments to three discriminatory laws regarding the status of returnees. At the end of May and in September 2000, the High Commissioner visited Croatia again, assessing the situation in the light of the programme of the Government that came to power after the parliamentary elections and that intends to bring Croatian law and practice into conformity with its international commitments, with full respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The HCNM funds and monitors, through the Project Unit, the Knin Legal Aid Project, in which attorneys advise and represent returnees in court and administrative procedures in order to assist them to resolve their property and housing cases. At the end of 1999, a similar project was started in the Danube region.

2.3 Estonia

The High Commissioner has suggested some changes to the State Language Law in Estonia. In June, the Riigikogu adopted a number of amendments. The High Commissioner welcomed the adoption of the law in a statement on 15 June and concluded that “the text of the Law is largely in conformity with Estonia's international obligations and commitments”. However, he emphasized in his statement that implementing regulations to be elaborated by the Cabinet of Ministers would have to “follow the letter and spirit of the amended Law”. The office continues its co-operation with the Estonian authorities in the drafting of these implementing regulations.

Additionally, the High Commissioner has followed other minority issues such as arise in relation to the election law, the naturalization process, language and teacher-training programmes and the implementation of the Government’s integration policy.

In August 2000, the High Commissioner opened a seminar on training teachers for integration, held in Narva, which had been organized jointly by the Narva Teacher Training College and the OSCE Mission to Estonia.

2.4 Hungary

The High Commissioner visited Hungary in November 1999 and September 2000. On both occasions, he discussed the position of the Hungarian Government concerning Hungarian minorities in Slovakia, Romania and Vojvodina (Yugoslavia). He also raised the issue, unresolved since 1993, of minority representation in the National Assembly.

2.5 Kazakhstan

The main focus of the work of the High Commissioner in Kazakhstan was on the further development and strengthening of the principal mechanisms for dialogue and interaction between the majority and minority ethnic groups, as well as between the different minority groups in the country.

In this respect, the High Commissioner continued to assist the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan in an on-going effort to improve its *modus operandi* by streamlining the Assembly’s structure and developing its own tools for early warning and early prevention of potential conflicts. As part of the overall effort, the High Commissioner also helped the Assembly to improve the performance of its own Research and Analysis Centre by means of a special monitoring network based on sub-regional structures and local correspondents, initially created with the close assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner.

Improved knowledge of the international standards relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and increased capacity of the central and local administration to deal with minority-related problems and prevent interethnic conflicts were also priorities for the High Commissioner. In this connection, the High Commissioner organized a series of specially designed meetings and seminars aimed at increasing knowledge and experience in this area, including a Seminar on Minorities without Kin States, as well as the Lund, Oslo and Hague Recommendations.

Special attention has been devoted to developments relevant to the language law and language policy.

2.6 Kyrgyzstan

The High Commissioner is engaged in strengthening the capacity-building of the national and local structures to deal with interethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan. He is also developing further mechanisms for early warning and early prevention.

The High Commissioner supports the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan and its structures, in particular the Information and Research Centre, which organized target-oriented seminars and issues special bulletins on matters relating to interethnic relations and harmony.

The High Commissioner attaches great importance to building capacity to deal with inter-ethnic problems. In 2000, the Office of the High Commissioner, in co-operation with the Academy of Management under the President of Kyrgyzstan, organized a series of training workshops for local officials, as well as minority and NGO representatives on managing interethnic relations.

The High Commissioner continued to support the functioning of the Special Monitoring Network providing the Kyrgyz Government and the OSCE with regular detailed information and analyses on interethnic relations in different regions of Kyrgyzstan. (This project was started at the High Commissioner's initiative and underlies direct support in 1996.) The opening of the Osh sub-office of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek made it possible for the Centre to take over the administration of the Network from the local NGO that had been chosen because no OSCE structures were in place. During his last visit to Kyrgyzstan, the High Commissioner reviewed the structure of the Network.

The High Commissioner continues to devote special attention to strengthening interethnic harmony in the South of the Republic. He has had discussions with the authorities on the threat of terrorism in the area.

2.7 Latvia

On 9 December 1999, the High Commissioner welcomed the adoption of the State Language Law by the *Saeima*. He stated:

“I welcome the adoption of the State Language Law by the *Saeima*. Analysis of the revised text of the State Language Law adopted by the *Saeima* today leads me to the conclusion that the Law is now essentially in conformity with Latvia's international obligations and commitments. I trust that the Cabinet of Ministers will follow the letter and spirit of the Law in elaborating implementing regulations, as foreseen in certain provisions of the Law, and in supervising public administration of the Law.”

From spring to late summer, the High Commissioner dispatched three expert missions comprised of experts from his Office and from the Council of Europe and independent experts to discuss with Latvian experts the various draft regulations on the State Language Law. In August, the Cabinet of Ministers approved regulations for the Language Law, which the High Commissioner assessed “as being essentially in conformity with both the Law and Latvia's international obligations.”

The High Commissioner also followed the implementation of the naturalization and integration process and related matters.

2.8 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the HCNM has focused on the problem of higher education in the Albanian language. He visited the country several times in order to become acquainted with the positions of the Government, the opposition parties and the Albanian community. In February 2000, he brought along three international education experts for the meetings with the Government Commission for Preparation of the Draft Law on Higher Education. The new law subsequently adopted constitutes the legal basis for solving the problem. During his visit in April 2000, he presented his further recommendations. He suggested the creation of a private institute of higher education consisting of two sections, one dealing with the training of teachers for the higher classes of primary schools and for secondary education, and the other providing training for key positions in business management and public administration. The High Commissioner also promotes and supports the so-called "transition-year programme" initiated at his recommendation by the former Foundation on Interethnic Relations (now the Project Unit of the HCNM) in 1997.

2.9 Moldova

Over the past year, the High Commissioner has become increasingly active in Moldova. Most of the High Commissioner's activities in Moldova relate to language issues, which, in the past, have been a source of interethnic tension.

In May 2000, the High Commissioner co-hosted a seminar in Chisinau on the education and linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities. In September 2000, he returned to Moldova. He visited two schools in Trans-Dniestria which are among the seven schools in eastern Moldova that persist in teaching the Moldovan language in the Latin script despite the efforts of the Trans-Dniestrian authorities to curb such activities. In Tiraspol, he called upon the Trans-Dniestrian leaders not to hinder the activities of these schools.

In the autumn of 2000, the Office of the High Commissioner launched a project, in co-operation with the Moldovan Government, to improve the quality and availability of teaching of the Moldovan language, particularly among children from minority communities.

2.10 Romania

During the past year, the High Commissioner has made several visits to Romania, mainly concerning the issue of minority tertiary education. He has tried to increase the opportunities for minorities, particularly the Hungarian minority, to study at university in their mother tongue. Most of his attention has been focused on building on existing opportunities at Babes-Bolyai University (BBU) in Cluj-Napoca. In February 2000, the High Commissioner, together with three international education experts, submitted recommendations to the University on expanding the concept of multiculturalism at BBU. The University Charter was revised, taking into account the High Commissioner's recommendations. In October 2000, the High Commissioner co-hosted a seminar at the University on integrating diversity in higher education: lessons from Romania.

2.11 Russia

In addition to his visits to Ukraine to review the situation regarding schooling in the Russian language (see below), the High Commissioner decided also to review the situation regarding schooling in the Ukrainian language in the Russian Federation. Conclusions and possible recommendations are to be made towards the end of 2000. In August, the collection of data was commenced when a senior adviser, together with two independent experts, visited St. Petersburg, Moscow and the Tyumen Oblast in Siberia. The High Commissioner also had several conversations with Russian representatives and with representatives of the Ukrainian minority on a visit to Moscow.

2.12 Slovak Republic

The High Commissioner continued to monitor interethnic relations in Slovakia. While considerable attention was paid to Roma issues (see below), the High Commissioner also kept abreast of issues of concern to the Hungarian minority. These include public administration reform, minority language use, education issues and constitutional reform.

2.13 Turkey

The High Commissioner visited Turkey on the occasion of a seminar organized by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to deliver a speech on the question of national minorities within a State.

2.14 Ukraine

At the beginning of 2000, the High Commissioner was approached by the Russian Government regarding the situation of the Russian-speaking minority in Ukraine and, more specifically, the use of the Russian language and education in the Russian language. The Ukrainian side raised the issue of the Ukrainian minority in the Russian Federation (especially the educational possibilities). After consultations with both sides, the High Commissioner, accompanied by a senior adviser and two external specialists, visited Ukraine during the summer in order to receive first-hand information on the situation. The data collected will be analyzed, with a view to presenting recommendations to the Ukrainian authorities before the end of the year.

2.15 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The High Commissioner met in June in Montenegro with representatives from national minorities from Serbia, and discussed their situation in the current political atmosphere. The High Commissioner will continue to monitor developments closely.

2.16 The Roma and Sinti

In April 2000, the HCNM issued a report on the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area. The report, which was elaborated under the High Commissioner's guidance throughout

1999, focuses on the complex problems faced by Roma populations in a number of OSCE participating States and provides recommendations on how these problems can be overcome.

The issues addressed include discrimination and racial violence, education, often-worsening living conditions and poor health, and political participation. The report takes a thematic approach, but also cites concrete situations and policies in those OSCE participating States with sizeable Romani communities. In doing so, it draws attention not only to some of the most difficult issues being faced by Romani communities across the OSCE region, but also to some of the more promising initiatives that have been undertaken by OSCE States, as well as by Romani communities themselves.

The report also provides an overview of OSCE commitments and initiatives relating to Roma and Sinti and recommends enhancement of the mandate of the OSCE ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues.

The report was officially launched at a seminar organized by the High Commissioner, and hosted by the Slovak Government, in Bratislava in June. The aim of the seminar, which brought together Romani leaders, along with representatives of governments, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, was to encourage further reflection on and discussion of the report, and to explore ways to stimulate responsible and effective policy-making with regard to Romani issues in the OSCE area. In particular, the seminar aimed to give impetus to the work of the ODIHR Contact Point in finding ways to make it possible to implement the recommendations outlined in the report.

2.17 Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life

Pursuant to a request from the HCNM, in September 1999, a group of internationally recognized independent experts elaborated the Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life. The Lund Recommendations, which constitute a set of suggestions and alternatives for consideration by OSCE participating States in addressing disputes over decision-making processes in democratic States, were the subject of a conference organized by the HCNM in Vienna in May 2000. Participants representing governments, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, together with independent experts, discussed the contents, possible applications and overall value of the Recommendations.

3. Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFM)

In March 2000, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media presented his second *Yearbook 1999/2000: Freedom and Responsibility*, which not only outlined in detail the activities of the Representative and his Office, but also provided a forum for European, North American and Russian authors to present their subjective views on freedom of expression and to discuss such issues as reconciliation in South-Eastern Europe.

The *Yearbook* also contains an overview of country-related activities.

3.1 COUNTRY-RELATED ISSUES

3.1.1 Albania

From 18 to 20 July 2000, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media visited Albania, where he held talks with members of the OSCE Presence, senior government officials and members of parliament, journalists, media owners, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. On 19 July, he chaired a round table of leading media owners and editors on the Albanian media: new laws, new rights, new responsibilities.

3.1.2 Belarus

On 28 January 2000, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media wrote to Ural Latypov, Foreign Minister of Belarus, raising his concern regarding the alleged campaign of harassment against the famous Belarus writer, Vasil' Bykov, who had recently returned to Minsk. In the end, Bykov had to leave the country again and is currently living and working in Germany.

On several occasions, the Representative has written to the Belarus Government, urging them to respect their commitments as an OSCE participating State regarding freedom of expression.

3.1.3 Ireland

On 23 and 24 February 2000, the Representative paid an official visit to Ireland at the invitation of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Irish Parliament. He met with government officials and parliamentarians. The OSCE Representative spoke at the School of Communications on media freedom in Europe – the role of the OSCE. He also visited the Dardistown Cemetery to honour the late Veronica Guerin, an Irish journalist who was murdered in 1996 while researching a story on the mafia.

3.1.4 Romania

On 8 and 9 May 2000, the OSCE Representative paid his first official visit to Romania at the invitation of the Foreign Minister, who is currently also a member of the OSCE Troika. In Romania, the Representative met with the Chairmen of the Culture, Art and Media Commissions of the two Chambers of the Romanian parliament, with members of the National Audio-Visual Council, with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Romania, Petre Roman, with officials of the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the President, and also with journalists, with representations of a local media NGO and with representatives of an NGO representing Roma minority media in Romania. As to the media situation in Romania, the talks focused on media legislation, libel cases filed against journalists, and the protection of media workers and issues related to training in journalism.

3.1.5 Russia

On several occasions, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media raised his concerns regarding the current media situation in Russia, especially in the light of the military operations in Chechnya. One of the Representative's concerns was the case of Andrei Babitsky, the Radio Liberty correspondent who had gone missing in Chechnya. He has since been charged

by the Office of the Public Prosecutor with using false documents. The OSCE Representative on several occasions appealed to the Russian Government to drop all charges against Mr. Babitsky.

The OSCE Representative intervened with the Government regarding the situation concerning Media-Most, a leading Russian media conglomerate owned by Vladimir Gusinsky. The media belonging to this conglomerate tend to take a generally critical attitude towards the Government. Three incidents during the first half of 2000 – the raid on the premises of Media-Most, the detention of Vladimir Gusinsky, and the delay in allowing a top manager with Media-Most, Igor Malashenko, to leave for the World Economic Forum on Central and Eastern Europe – suggested a certain pattern of action against Media-Most. These incidents, on the other hand, have not so far affected the work of the media that are part of this conglomerate. Recently, all charges against Mr. Gusinsky, who was being investigated for fraud, were dropped and he was allowed to leave the country.

3.1.6 Ukraine

On 2 December 1999, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Council of Europe and Irex/ProMedia held a public round table on free media and libel legislation in Kiev, Ukraine, in co-operation with the Government of Ukraine and the Office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator. The round table, at the Institute for Foreign Affairs of Kiev University, was attended by over 100 participants, among them government and parliament officials, judges, lawyers and journalists. The objective of this round table, proposed by the OSCE Representative during his visit to Kiev in May 1999, was to bring together responsible representatives of Ukrainian agencies (executive, legislative, judiciary) and the Ukrainian media to provide a detailed analysis of the current situation and to prepare recommendations on possible steps forward. The participation of experts from the Council of Europe and from Poland made it possible to provide information on international legal standards and practices regarding libel and defamation.

In their recommendations, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Council of Europe advised the Ukrainian Government on how to improve the application of already existing legislation libel and on other measures that should be taken to improve the current situation. Among other things, the round table urged the Government to ensure proper application by the courts of domestic laws that are in compliance with European legal standards.

Currently, the OSCE Representative is working together with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator and the Ukrainian Government on implementing these recommendations.

The OSCE Representative also issued a country report on Ukraine that analysed the media legislation in the country as well as the state of the print and electronic media.

3.1.7 United States of America

On 4 April 2000, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media addressed the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe of the US Congress in Washington, D.C. In his remarks, the OSCE Representative gave a general overview of his activities and briefed the Commission on a number of cases that his Office had dealt with in the previous months.

3.1.8 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Throughout the reporting period, the OSCE Representative continued to focus on the large-scale oppression of the independent media in Serbia. On many occasions, he intervened directly with the Yugoslav authorities. He also asked the Russian Government to make use of its influence on Belgrade. Some of the facts concerning the media situation that were brought to the attention of the OSCE participating States by the Representative are as follows. Since the beginning of the year, about 15 independent media agencies have been shut down. More than 200 broadcasters were threatened with closure after the Government refused to renew their licences. Arrests of journalists and acts of vandalism are common, and the authorities have stepped up their threats against members of the press. Moreover, during the past 20 months, about 30 media agencies have been ordered to pay heavy fines totalling 28 million dinars (EUR 2.6 million).

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was dismayed by the sentencing, on 26 July 2000, by the Nis military court, of a Serbian journalist, Miroslav Filipovic, to seven years in prison. Filipovic, a correspondent for the independent daily *Danas* and AFP, was found guilty of “espionage” and “spreading false information”. The sentence is the harshest yet imposed on a Serbian journalist by the Milosevic regime. The OSCE Representative demanded the immediate release of Filipovic, a courageous journalist, who is now in prison for telling the truth. The Representative’s efforts on his behalf were commended in August by the OSCE Chairmanship.

On 26 July 2000, the Representative wrote to the members of the G8, drawing their attention to a letter he had received from Ivan Markovic, Belgrade's Minister of Telecommunications, accusing the Representative of being a “German agent”. In his letter, the OSCE Representative pointed out that “raising the flag of ‘treason’ to indict morally, and often through criminal charges, critical journalists and internal political opponents was a favourite technique in many totalitarian States, especially in the Soviet Union decades ago. It is now being used by the Government of Mr. Milosevic to attack independent media and others who oppose the current dangerous situation into which Belgrade rule has led the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia”.

The OSCE Representative continued to monitor the media situation in Kosovo, where one of his main concerns are cases of “hate speech” in the local Albanian-language media. The Representative had been raising these issues since October 1999. Some of these cases, in his view, will probably be dealt with under the new UNMIK regulations of 17 June regarding broadcast and print media. These regulations, dealing with the conduct of the print media and the licensing and regulation of the broadcast media, are an important step in developing a democratic society in Kosovo. They are timely and should be implemented as swiftly as possible. Speaking at the OSCE Permanent Council on 13 July, the Representative stressed that “we should bear in mind that these regulations are established in a society which does not have an independent court system and that the laws applicable in Kosovo are those of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia”.

The OSCE Representative also informed the OSCE participating States that the UNMIK regulations had already been heavily criticized by NGOs as being too intrusive. In his view, under the current circumstances, the anarchy reigning on the media scene, where, for example, it is almost impossible to monitor all unauthorized radio stations, can only be guided into channels by an international organization, in this case the OSCE.

The Representative visited Kosovo in February 2000. During the trip, he met with Kosovar journalists, OSCE mission officials and the KFOR Commander, General Klaus Reinhardt, and also took part in the conference on ten years of conflict in the Balkans, organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and *Koha Ditore*. The Representative also visited Gracanica Monastery, one of the Serbian Orthodox Church's unique monuments, located in a Serbian enclave just outside Priština. There he met Bishop Artemje and Father Sava, the main moderate representatives of the Kosovo Serbian community. The Representative stressed the need to restart a Serbian publication, independent from the Belgrade Government, in Kosovo. He suggested establishing a weekly newsletter that would only require minimal funds.

In March 2000, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo started the distribution of children's books to schools in Kosovo. This project was initiated by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media during a visit to a refugee camp in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in May 1999, and funded by the NGO Cap Anamur. Thousands of books were produced for the children of Kosovo, including a play, short stories and two novels. The books were distributed throughout the province.

After the elections of Mr. Kostunica as President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, journalists that have been in prison were released and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is now working closely with the authorities in Belgrade on supporting independent media in Serbia.

3.2 SPECIAL PROJECTS

3.2.1 The media and war

On 3 January 2000, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media spoke to the standing committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In his remarks, the Representative concentrated on the dramatic situation of journalists when OSCE participating States are involved in military activities. He focused on the NATO campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the latest military activity in Chechnya. He stressed that democracies, even at war, must always accept and follow their basic international commitments. They were and they would remain the example others would use, or abuse, when they went to war.

3.2.2 The media and corruption

Currently the OSCE Representative is organizing a conference on the media and corruption. He plans to invite journalists from the newly emerging democracies to discuss how they in their countries are dealing with corruption and what dangers they face investigating these stories. Among those planning to attend are reporters from South-Eastern Europe and Russia.

3.3.3 The Internet

The OSCE Representative is focusing on the structural issue related to freedom of expression and the Internet. His Office took part in a conference on this matter in July in Brussels and the Representative will continue analysing the issue.

4. OSCE Secretariat

4.1 Office of the Secretary General

The Office of the Secretary General supports the Secretary General in his role as the OSCE's chief manager and administrator. The Office carries out a number of activities in support of the Secretary General, including executive support, diplomatic liaison, press and public information, legal services, internal auditing, contacts with the headquarters of other international organizations and NGOs, contacts with the Mediterranean and other Partners for Co-operation, support for seminars, etc. These will be further elaborated on in the separate sections below, as well as the activities of the Secretary General during the reporting period.

In the period under review, and in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 331 of 15 December 1999 (PC.DEC/331), a new position at the Director level (D1) was established in the Office of the Secretary General, while the corresponding P5 position was eliminated. Furthermore, in line with Permanent Council Decision No. 364 of 29 June 2000 on strengthening of OSCE operational capacities (PC.DEC/364), the External Co-operation Section was placed under the direct supervision of the Secretary General.

4.1.1 Activities of the Secretary General

During the period under review, 1 December 1999 – 31 October 2000, the Secretary General travelled world-wide and actively participated in a number of different external activities, as well as in more OSCE-centred activities, the main ones of which are described below. (*N.B. For the activities of the Secretary General in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia, see section 3.2.*)

4.1.1.1 External activities of the Secretary General

A. *Co-operation with other international organizations*

Work aimed at establishing better relations with other international organizations constituted a major part of the Secretary General's external activities in the reporting period.

From 2 to 6 December 1999, the Secretary General visited New York, where he had a number of meetings with senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat, including Deputy Secretary-General Frechette and Under-Secretaries-General Miyet, Prendergast and Sevan. He also joined the Chairman-in-Office for a meeting with Secretary-General Annan. The Secretary General's discussions focused on co-operation in the field, particularly in Kosovo, Tajikistan and Georgia, and on security-related matters. The UN colleagues also pledged to assist the OSCE and to share their experiences in, among others, the fields relevant to the development of the REACT programme, the OSCE civil police capability and the Operation Centre.

Another international actor with whom the OSCE is constantly developing closer contacts is the European Union. Hence, on 15 December 1999, the Secretary General briefed the EU – OSCE Working Group in Brussels on OSCE matters, specifically tasks for the OSCE arising out of the Istanbul Summit and the Secretariat's priorities. He also met with the Secretary General/High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Solana, with whom he agreed on future contacts and interaction in the process of developing the REACT programme and the EU non-military crisis management mechanism.

The Secretary General also met with the Director for General Matters and Multilateral Relations in the European Commission, Viñas, with the aim of agreeing on a programme of future contacts and co-operation. In addition, they discussed co-operation in some regional areas, especially in Central Asia, the Caucasus and South-Eastern Europe.

The Secretary General has been invited by the French EU Presidency to address the OSCE Working Group in Brussels on 7 November 2000. On the same day, the Secretary General will also meet with Secretary General/High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Solana, and the Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson.

The annual informal tripartite meeting (see also section 4.1.2) took place on 25 February 2000 in Geneva. The Secretary General participated in the meeting, with other high-level representatives from the OSCE, the Council of Europe and Geneva-based United Nations agencies such as UNHCR and UNHCHR, as well as the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Balkans, Bildt. This year, for the first time, a representative of the European Commission attended the meeting, together with the traditional partners associated with this process, namely, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration. The discussion focused mainly on progress towards peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe, including the organizations' field operations in the region. The participants also reviewed their organizations' activities in support of the Stability Pact.

The good relations between the OSCE and the Council of Europe were further maintained through the annual high-level 2+2 meeting (see also section 4.1.2), which took place on 12 April in Vienna with the participation of the Secretary General. The discussion focused on current issues of concern to the OSCE and the Council of Europe, among them the conflict in Chechnya, preparation for local elections in Kosovo and the situation in Montenegro, Moldova and Belarus. The close co-operation between the two organizations, both active in the fields of democratization, human rights and institution-building, was stressed. To this end, the OSCE and the Council of Europe agreed on a Common Catalogue of Co-operation Modalities which was signed by both Secretaries General. A second high-level 2+2 meeting took place on 31 October in Rome. The Secretary General attended the meeting together with the Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner. The meeting focused on the developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and relations of its constituent parts, on the election and post-election situation in Kosovo, on the situation in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

On 17 and 18 May and 8 and 9 November the Secretary General visited Strasbourg, where he held consultations at the Council of Europe, and had an exchange of views with the Ministers' Deputies.

B. Conferences, seminars (as well as bilateral contacts with OSCE participating States)

In addition to working on closer contacts between the OSCE and other international organizations, the Secretary General focused on bilateral visits and contacts with OSCE participating States, particularly host States of OSCE field activities. Often, conferences and seminars attended by the Secretary General provided good opportunities to maintain and further improve these contacts.

From 6 to 8 March, the Secretary General visited the United Kingdom, where, on 6 March, he delivered an opening statement on political and economic prospects in the Caspian

Sea region in a Wilton Park conference. On 7 and 8 March, he had consultations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as well as with representatives of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

On 16 March, during a visit to Vienna by the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Tarasyuk, the Secretary General had an opportunity to meet with him. They discussed, *inter alia* the work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator as well as the Ukrainian initiative to create an ethnic research centre.

On 20 and 21 March, the Secretary General visited Georgia. He was received by President Shevardnadze and met with other high-ranking Georgian officials, representatives of international organizations in the country, representatives of the diplomatic corps and the members of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. Discussions mainly focused on the activities of the OSCE and the Mission to Georgia following the Istanbul Summit. A possible expansion of the border monitoring operation was also discussed.

The Secretary General was invited by the International Peace Academy to attend a conflict prevention conference held on 13 and 14 April in New York. He made a presentation on strengthening existing mechanisms and developing new instruments. On the margins of the conference, the Secretary General took the opportunity to meet with officials in the UN Secretariat, including Deputy Secretary-General Frechette. Discussions focused mainly on the co-operation between the two organizations, particularly in Georgia. The Secretary General also met with the President of the Open Society Institute in New York to discuss potential co-operation.

At the invitation of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, the Secretary General, in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia, attended the World Economic Forum, the first Kazakhstan-sponsored Eurasian Economic Summit, which took place from 26 to 28 April.

On 14 and 15 June, the Secretary General, in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for Central Asia, attended, as an observer, a conference on terrorism and counter-terrorism in Central Asia, held in Washington. (See also section 3.2.).

On the following day, 16 June, the Secretary General had consultations at the United States Department of State with the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Pickering, and other high-level officials, on the OSCE, its development and activities. The Secretary General also met with staff members of the Helsinki Committee and heard a briefing on the work of the State Department operations centre.

The Secretary General attended an international conference Towards a Community of Democracies, on 25 and 26 June in Warsaw and actively participated in the ministerial panel on co-operation in international and regional organizations to strengthen democratic institutions, chaired by US Secretary of State Albright.

The Secretary General was invited to visit Berlin on 29 June to attend the debate in the *Bundestag* on the 25th anniversary of the OSCE. The *Bundestag* adopted two resolutions, strongly supporting the OSCE and its objectives. In the debate many *Bundestag* members highly praised the work of the OSCE Missions and staff.

The Secretary General also took the opportunity to hold consultations on various issues related to the OSCE with the State Minister, Dr. Zöpel, and other high-level officials in the

Foreign Ministry, as well as with the Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee of the *Bundestag*, Dr. Klose.

At the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, the Secretary General attended a meeting on Central Asia held on 21 August in Bern. The aims of the meeting were to analyse the present situation as well as the risks that exist in Central Asia, and to further evaluate OSCE and Swiss activities and capacities in the region, in order to determine possible areas of co-operation and support for Central Asia through the activities of international organizations, international financial institutions and individual countries.

Within the framework of his stay in Bern, the Secretary General was received by the Federal Councillor Deiss and had an extensive exchange of views with him regarding Central Asia and other areas of OSCE activities. He also had a meeting with the Secretary of State von Däniken.

On 21 September the Secretary General participated in the conference on reconstruction of the Balkans in Prague, where he was asked to deliver an opening statement. The conference was organized by the East-West Institute in co-operation with the George C. Marshall Foundation and the World Bank.

On 28 September, he attended a workshop in Bangkok on Thailand and the OSCE, the way towards future co-operation, and spoke on the OSCE and co-operative security. The following day, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Pitsuwan, received the OSCE delegation and *inter alia* expressed his country's interest in becoming an OSCE Partner for Co-operation.

On 30 October the Secretary General opened the 2000 OSCE Mediterranean seminar on Confidence-Building Measures and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures: The OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region, which took place on 30-31 October in Portoroz, Slovenia.

C. *Relations with the academic community*

Another field of external activity to which the Secretary General devoted a great deal of effort during the reporting period was the establishment links with the academic community. (*N.B.: Some of these activities are already mentioned in the part on Conferences and seminars.*)

On 2 May, the Secretary General was invited to the East-West Institute's annual awards dinner in New York, where he was given the opportunity to act, on behalf of the OSCE, as a member of the Honorary Awards Presenting Committee. The dinner was followed by a conference on investment opportunities in South-Eastern Europe. On the margins of the conference, an informal brainstorming meeting on the future of South-Eastern Europe took place.

The Secretary General took the opportunity of his presence in New York to speak on prospects for stability and co-operation in Central Asia on 3 May at an Open Society Institute open forum attended by representatives from NGOs, the public, media, international organizations and UN delegations in New York.

On 3 July, the Secretary General delivered an opening statement at the Summer Academy on OSCE organized by the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) in Stadtschlaining (Peace Centre Burg Schlaining).

On 7 July, the Secretary General took part in the International Peace Academy's 30th Vienna Seminar on Peacemaking in the 21st century: The Case of Europe. He delivered a keynote statement in the panel on the respective roles of multilateral institutions in addressing conflicts in Europe, together with high-level UN and EU representatives.

The Secretary General on 8 July attended the conference on the Bratislava Process for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – one year after, organized by the East-West Institute. In his personal capacity, he made a keynote presentation in the panel on the new international partnership: co-operation between community for change from FRY and the international community – challenges ahead, chaired by Ambassador Gyarmati, Senior Vice-President of the East-West Institute. Prominent representatives of pro-democracy forces from Serbia as well as international personalities took part in the event.

On 18 September, the Secretary General was requested to speak in Venice at the awarding ceremony for the European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratization courses 1999-2000 and the opening ceremony of the EMA courses 2000-2001, both as a member of the Advisory Council of the EMA and as the Secretary General of the OSCE.

4.1.1.2 OSCE-centred activities of the Secretary General

Among the Secretary General's OSCE-specific activities, the Ministerial Troika meetings are recurring events, and this year the Secretary General attended four Ministerial Troika meetings, on 21 January, 31 March and 27 October in Vienna and on 5 July in Bucharest.

Another internal activity which took place during the reporting period was the opening of the Eighth Economic Forum in Prague on 11 April by the Secretary General. The meeting focused on economic aspects of post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as on the environmental impact of conflicts. On the margins of the Economic Forum, the Secretary General met with President Rakhmonov of Tajikistan.

The Secretary General also maintained relations with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and on 6 July he addressed the ninth annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest, with the Chairperson-in-Office, other Heads of OSCE Institutions, the OSCE Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities and the Gender Adviser of the OSCE Secretariat.

The Secretary General also attended the Heads of Missions meetings, held in Vienna on 17-18 January and on 27 June, and the regional Heads of Missions meetings on 11 and 12 September in Sarajevo.

All these occasions not only gave the Secretary General the opportunity to engage in debates on issues of substance and of interest to the OSCE, depending on the agendas of the different events, and he actively seized them to make the OSCE and its activities better known, and to give the Organization a higher public profile.

4.1.2 External Co-operation Section

During the reporting period, the External Co-operation Section underwent important changes. In line with Permanent Council Decision No. 364 of 29 June 2000, on strengthening the operational capabilities of the OSCE, the External Co-operation Section was moved from the Conflict Prevention Centre to the Office of the Secretary General. In addition, the Decision stipulates that the External Co-operation Section "...will be responsible for the implementation of the modalities of co-operation in accordance with part II of the Operational Document of the Charter for European Security", together with other sections in the Secretariat. The Platform for Co-operative Security, as the operational document of the Charter, aims at strengthening the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between the institutions and organizations concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area. Part II of the Platform specifies modalities for co-operation.

Consequently, with the adoption of Permanent Council Decision No. 364, the overall workload of the External Co-operation Section has increased. Among other things, the Section was tasked with the responsibility for preparing for the first time an Annual Report on interaction between organizations and institutions in the OSCE area, in addition to the regular Annual Report on OSCE activities.

During the period under review, the External Co-operation Section organized meetings in Vienna between the OSCE and its partner organizations and, upon invitation, participated in meetings organized by other international organizations, in addition to maintaining close contacts with NGOs and the academic community. The Section, in line with its responsibilities, continued to provide information and support to the Secretary General through the preparation of background papers, talking points and speeches. Prior to the reorganization of the Secretariat, similar support was also provided to the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre. With regard to relations with the OSCE Partners for Co-operation, the External Co-operation Section continued to support the Chairperson-in-Office and the Chairman of the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. The Section organized meetings and workshops, including the annual OSCE Mediterranean Seminars in Amman (1999) and Portoroz (2000), a workshop for experts, and the OSCE-Japan Conference 2000.

4.1.2.1 Liaison with international organizations and institutions, including sub-regional co-operation frameworks

In 2000, the External Co-operation Section continued its main task of acting as a channel for communication between the OSCE Headquarters in Vienna and the headquarters of other international organizations, including the United Nations and its agencies, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Western European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and others. Close liaison was maintained with representatives of international organizations through formal and informal channels. Co-operation and political consultations at headquarters level are vital tools for strengthening mutually reinforcing relationships and fostering co-ordinated approaches to ensure efficient use of available resources.

The External Co-operation Section participated in and co-ordinated OSCE preparations for the tripartite high-level meeting that took place on 25 February in Geneva, between the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, with the participation of the Under-Secretary-General and Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva and the Chairmanships and Secretaries General of the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The meeting focused on progress

towards peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe and gave participants an opportunity to exchange information about the activities of their respective organizations in the area. As in previous years, the Section also co-ordinated the Secretariat's input for the target-oriented meeting, which this time focused on law enforcement and the police. The meeting, which took place in February, and was hosted by the United Nations Office in Geneva, was attended by expert level representatives of the same organizations that participated in the tripartite meeting.

During the reporting period, the External Co-operation Section continued endeavouring to develop and strengthen relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE. In doing so, the Section supported the visits to the Council of Europe and accompanied the Chairmanship on these visits.

Following the practice established in recent years, the Section organized the high-level meeting with the Council of Europe and the subsequent "2+2" expert-level meeting, both of which were held in Vienna. Another high-level "2+2" meeting between the two organizations took place on 31 October 2000 in Rome, organized by the Italian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers. The Head of the Section also accompanied the OSCE Secretary General to the meeting of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg on 9 November 2000.

Co-operation with the Rapporteur Group on Relations with the OSCE (GR-OSCE) was further consolidated this year. The Section participated in and co-ordinated preparations for the meetings of the Rapporteur Group.

The *Common Catalogue of Co-operation Modalities*, signed in April 2000 by the Secretaries General of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, was jointly compiled and reviewed with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The Catalogue is an important reflection of the two organizations' commitment to the mutual reinforcement of action and is also an attempt to guarantee institutional memory.

Organization of and participation in other headquarters meetings, such as staff meetings and working-level meetings, has also been an important component of the Section's work. The Section participated, *inter alia*, in working-level and staff meetings with the EU, NATO and the CIS, the Annual Heads of Missions meeting to which international organizations were invited and, the Central Asia information-sharing meeting between international organizations and institutions. Daily contacts at working level between different international organizations have proved vital to a well-functioning co-operation between organizations.

Throughout the year, the External Co-operation Section continued with the practice of supporting a wide range of courses organized by the NATO (SHAPE) School in Oberammergau, including one which took place in Baku. The Section also participated in other seminars, organized by international organizations and institutions, on topics relevant to its activities.

4.1.2.2 Liaison with non-governmental organizations and academic institutions

In addition to maintaining close links with international organizations, the Section played an important role as the focal point for contacts with NGOs and the academic community. In performing this task, the Section participated throughout the year in different seminars and workshops.

4.1.2.3 Annual reports

In addition to drafting the Annual Report of the Secretary General on OSCE activities, the Section, pursuant to the relevant provision in the Platform for Co-operative Security, has for the first time drafted an Annual Report of the Secretary General on interaction with international organizations and institutions in the OSCE area. This report describes the OSCE's interaction and co-operation with its partner organizations.

4.1.2.4 Relations with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and the Partners for Co-operation

The Section for External Co-operation continued its liaison with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (MPCs) and the Partners for Co-operation by maintaining contacts and facilitating the exchange of information, and by supporting the Chairperson-in-Office and the Chairman of the Contact Group with the MPCs, in regard to issues concerning relations with the Partners. The Section is also responsible for the organization of the annual Mediterranean Seminars and other related meetings.

The highlights with regard to relations between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners in the reporting period are outlined below.

The OSCE and Jordan jointly organized the 1999 OSCE Mediterranean Seminar on Implementation of Human Dimension Commitments, which took place on 6 and 7 December 1999 in Amman, Jordan. A series of recommendations made during the Seminar were compiled by the Section and circulated among the participating States and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (SEC.GAL.4/00).

On the eve of the 1999 OSCE Summit in Istanbul, the Head of the External Co-operation Section accompanied the Secretary General of the OSCE to the annual meeting of the Ministerial Troika with the Foreign Ministers of the Mediterranean Partners.

Throughout the year, the Section provided support to the Chairman of the Contact Group with the MPCs. As the incoming Chairman of the Permanent Council for 2001, the Head of the Permanent Mission of Romania presided over the Contact Group meetings with the MPCs. The agendas of the meetings consisted of briefings by a representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on current OSCE activities, exchanges of information on developments in other fora for European-Mediterranean co-operation and other issues. Briefings were given by the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and Ambassador Salber, Head of the OSCE Centre in Almaty.

The Section organized and chaired a workshop for experts from the MPCs from 17 to 19 July 2000, at the Hofburg in Vienna. This responded to a wish expressed by the Mediterranean Partners during meetings held in Istanbul and subsequent meetings in Vienna that such an event should be held. The workshop was attended by all the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) and the Partners for Co-operation (Japan and the Republic of Korea). It provided participants with the opportunity to meet and discuss with representatives from the Secretariat and other institutions, as well as with delegations from participating States. The full report, including recommendations, was distributed among the participating States and the Partners for Co-operation (SEC.GAL/95/00).

In 2000, the annual Mediterranean Seminar focused on confidence-building measures and confidence and security-building measures: their relevance for the Mediterranean region, and took place on 30 and 31 October 2000, in Portoroz, Slovenia. As the year 2000 marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the opening ceremony commemorated 25 years of co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners.

The conference was officially opened by the Foreign Minister of Slovenia, H.E. Mr. Peterle. The President of Malta, H.E. Prof. de Marco, delivered a keynote speech. Ambassador Parak, the Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, the Secretary General of the OSCE, and the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Dr. Severin also addressed the delegates.

During the Seminar, attended by thirty participating States and five Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, discussions focused on the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security: confidence-building measures (CBMs) and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs); mutually reinforcing institutions and their undertakings in the Mediterranean region; and the Mediterranean experience with CBMs and the possible relevance of OSCE tools, instruments and mechanisms for the Mediterranean region.

Some of the highlights of the co-operation with the Partners for Co-operation – Japan and the Republic of Korea – are outlined below.

In accordance with the provisions of the 1992 Helsinki Document, Japan continued to attend the plenary meetings of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation. Japan extended contributions to OSCE's endeavours in South-Eastern Europe, including by providing election supervisors for the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. In addition, Japan is currently seconding three Mission members, two to the Mission in Kosovo, and one to the Mission in Croatia.

Japan will host the first OSCE-Japan Conference this year. It is entitled OSCE-Japan Conference 2000: Comprehensive Security in Central Asia – Sharing OSCE and Asian Experiences, and will take place on 11 and 12 December in the Japanese capital. The Section is also responsible for the practical arrangements and organization of the Conference, together with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the host country.

The Republic of Korea also continued its co-operation with the OSCE, and, like all the other Partners, participated in a number of OSCE meetings that are open to all the Partners for Co-operation, such as the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and the Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings.

A Permanent Council decision (PC.DEC/377) was adopted on 9 November 2000 for an OSCE-Korea Conference to take place on 19-21 March 2001 in Seoul. The topic will focus on the applicability of OSCE confidence and security building measures in North-East Asia. The Section will also be responsible for the substantial preparation and organization of the conference.

Upon the adoption of Permanent Council Decision No. 378 on 9 November 2000, Thailand was welcomed as a Partner for Co-operation. Earlier, Thailand had expressed its interest in seeking closer relations with the OSCE by becoming a Partner. In view of this, Thailand organized a workshop in Bangkok at the end of September 2000 on Thailand and the OSCE: the way towards future co-operation, and invited the Secretary General of the OSCE and representatives from OSCE participating States, including Austria (Chairperson-in-Office), and France, to attend. The Foreign Minister of Thailand in a letter to the Chairperson-in-Office,

dated 11 October 2000 (CIO.GAL/109/00), requested that Thailand be granted the status of Partner for Co-operation.

4.1.3 Press and Public Information

The Press and Public Information Section is divided into three units: press, which concentrates on relations with the media; public information, which produces publications and ensures public outreach; and online services, which supervises and develops the OSCE website and assists Institutions and Missions in designing and maintaining their own web presences.

4.1.3.1 Press

Two events focused intense media interest on the OSCE during the reporting period: the Istanbul Summit Meeting and the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. As can be seen from two special editions of the press clippings produced by the Press and Public Information Section, the OSCE enjoyed extensive coverage in many leading world media outlets on these occasions. Apart from this, the Organization was regularly mentioned and scrutinized in connection with developments in Missions and field activities, in particular in relation to Chechnya (Russian Federation) and Kosovo and to trips by the Chairperson-in-Office to Mission areas. OSCE Institutions and other offices were also frequently mentioned in connection with human rights issues, minority rights and freedom of the media.

The spokesperson and press officer worked closely with the Austrian Chairmanship to keep the press and the general public aware of the Organization's activities and goals. This included a steady stream of press releases, frequent press briefings and press conferences, background briefings for selected journalists and organized trips for media representatives to Missions and field activities. Media representatives were invited to accompany the Chairperson-in-Office as well as other high OSCE officials on trips to the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and other Mission areas.

To promote the 25th anniversary in the press, the PPIS put together a press kit which was distributed to all participants at the 19 July commemorative meeting in Vienna, and sent to selected journalists with a note encouraging them to cover the story. There was wide coverage of the anniversary in the European press, especially in Austria, Finland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the CIS and South-Eastern European countries where the OSCE has Missions.

The PPIS organized two public affairs round table meetings with the participation of press officers and media focal points from all Missions, field activities and Institutions: in Vienna in May and in Tbilisi, Georgia, in October. These meetings served the purpose of intensifying co-operation in media work in the Organization, as well as of streamlining the corporate identity of the OSCE.

4.1.3.2 Public information

The scope of several activities, such as producing of the *OSCE Newsletter*, handling visitor groups and responding to information requests, expanded markedly during the year. For example, the size of the monthly *Newsletter* was increased by the inclusion of more news articles reflecting the amount of activity undertaken by the Organization (e.g. the Istanbul Summit, elections in some larger missions, OMIK's various responsibilities, etc). Editing and printing schedules were revised and the design was further developed.

The number of student groups interested in observing the Permanent Council and listening to a presentation on the OSCE grew to two a week during the spring and early summer, and shows every sign of continuing to increase. Computer-based PowerPoint presentations were further developed and tailored to each group's level of knowledge. A surge in public inquiries by the phone, fax and particularly by e-mail was observed, and where applicable and efficient, many are now channelled to the website for further information. Others are dealt with individually in a timely manner. The Researcher-in-Residence Programme, based in Prague, has been fully booked throughout the year (in June, responsibility was transferred to Prague).

More effort has gone into editing the series of fact sheets aimed at the general public, with all the Institutions now covered. The goal is to have a fact sheet on each of the active Missions by year's end. The *OSCE Handbook* underwent a thorough revision in the first half of 2000 and was reissued to coincide with the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. Other related projects, developed in close co-operation with the Austrian Chairmanship, included a special OSCE logo for the 25th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, a public information brochure comprising a fact sheet, a commemorative edition of the Helsinki Final Act (with archival photographs), a poster, bookmarks, and other small items of memorabilia. Celebration of the anniversary will culminate with the Ministerial Council in November 2000, when other special public information projects will come to fruition.

4.1.3.3 Online services

The online services unit of PPIS has established the public website (www.osce.org) as a primary source of current news and information on the activities of OSCE Institutions and field activities. During 2000, the website was restructured to make it more user-friendly. A special section was created for each OSCE Institution and field activity, thereby providing visitors with more information and fostering a deeper understanding of the Organization. Website traffic is continuing to grow rapidly and, with more than 1.7 million hits being recorded each month, the figures from 1999 have been doubled.

Special features introduced during the first part of the year include the OSCE online news database, which has quickly become a central source of information on all OSCE activities. Press releases, statements and media advisories issued by all the OSCE Institutions and field activities are available in one easy-to-access place, and can be cross-referenced and searched according to date, topic, issuing body and/or special interest area. An online subscription service was introduced to further promote the rapid dissemination of OSCE news. Additional features included a greatly expanded OSCE documents library, online tender announcements and an expanded employment opportunities section.

During the second part of the year, the OSCE upcoming events calendar was created, providing an easy-to-use calendar of all OSCE upcoming events for a 12-month period. With listings provided by all the OSCE Institutions and field activities, the calendar rapidly became one of the most frequented services available on the website. The calendar also includes an extensive search capability, and users can customize the feature to meet their own particular requirements and preferences. Special-feature websites were created to support promotion and information-sharing relating to the OSCE commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Co-ordination and collaboration on website development issues continues to be promoted and supported. Daily technical and editorial support is provided to OSCE Institutions and field activities.

Preliminary work to identify infrastructure requirements to support OSCE online – phase II (semi-secure access Extranet) was carried out in co-operation with IT Services, with the aim of introducing content during the first half of 2001.

4.1.4 Legal services

Legal assistance was provided to the Secretary General, different departments of the OSCE Secretariat, to the OSCE Missions and field activities, as well as to the OSCE delegations. As far as the issue of OSCE legal capacity and privileges and immunities is concerned, the Legal Adviser drafted several documents in the context of the implementation of paragraph 34 of the Istanbul Summit Declaration. Legal advice was given on the application and interpretation of memoranda of understanding and on taxation issues. Work also included issues related to personnel matters, and the Legal Adviser drafted the regulations for Mission members and several other legal instruments relating to working conditions of the OSCE staff members and Mission members, for example: revision of the Organization Directive on Disciplinary Procedure, the Organization Directive on Appeals Procedures for Mission Members, the Organization Directive on Staff Representation, the new terms of assignment and the new Code of Conduct.

The Legal Adviser also gave advice on the application and interpretation of the current regulations and rules, and dealt with several appeals and disciplinary cases. With regard to contractual matters, the Legal Adviser drafted the standard lease agreement and, together with the temporary Legal Adviser, prepared the defence of the OSCE in an arbitration procedure. Several contracts were cleared and advice was given on insurance matters and other claims. As far as the development of administrative norms is concerned, the Legal Adviser drafted, among other documents, the Administrative Instruction on the Loss of or Damage to Personal Property and the model memorandum of understanding for OSCE meetings.

4.1.5 Auditing services

During the latter part of 1999 and the early part of 2000, the Internal Audit Section suffered from under-resourcing and its ability to discharge its remit was severely hampered. However, pursuant to Permanent Council Decision PC.DEC/331 of 15 December 1999, which decided to establish "... significantly strengthened mechanisms for internal oversight and financial control to support the Secretary General in his management of the Organization's resources", the internal audit function was enhanced and the Section expanded by an additional two posts. In March 2000, a new head of section as well as the additional internal auditor took up their posts. A further senior internal auditor post (P5) will be filled shortly. The Internal Audit Section has been renamed Internal Oversight.

Since the strengthening of the team in March, attention has been focused on analysing and assessing business processes and developing a comprehensive audit needs-assessment and strategy. This was completed while responding to requests for assistance and fulfilling existing commitments. During the latter half of the reporting period, seven audits were started and completed; reports were issued and advice given to management on a range of topics. The audit methodology has been enhanced, and a small auditing software package acquired.

The audit strategy and audit needs-assessment which were prepared during the reporting period will form the basis for a two-year rolling programme of work. These were based on an assessment of the risks facing the OSCE, a preliminary overview of the adequacy of systems and controls, and a broad assessment of the adequacy of skills available within the Organization.

The programme of activity that has been developed is designed to address the risks identified, the concerns of participating States and the decision of the Permanent Council to enhance and develop the function.

Further proposals to strengthen Internal Oversight have been included in the 2001 budget proposal and a draft mandate setting out the objectives, scope, authority and responsibility of the function has been presented to the Permanent Council. The draft Mandate and related draft changes to the Financial Regulations reflect the requirements of Permanent Council Decision 331 and enshrine the principles contained in Permanent Council Decision 374. These principles include the independence of the Internal Oversight function as well as the protection of the rights of individuals who provide information. Development of a mandate is another important step in strengthening a tool which will assist the Secretary General in the effective discharge of his responsibilities.

4.2 Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

In accordance with its mandate, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) continued and intensified its contacts with the international economic organizations and financial institutions, as well as with trans-border institutions and regional arrangements. These efforts have included several rounds of formal and informal consultations with, *inter alia*, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other parts of the UN system, both at headquarters and in the field, such as the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO); the European Commission (in Brussels); the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the International Energy Agency (IEA); the Council of Europe; the World Bank; various NATO departments, such as the Economic Committee and the Committee on the Challenges of a Modern Society; the Energy Charter Secretariat; the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC); Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE); and other NGOs.

The Office also continued to develop its links with the OSCE Missions and field operations, with the Co-ordinator visiting Missions in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Co-ordinator met collectively with the Heads of Mission during their January and June meetings in Vienna, as well as bilaterally during their individual visits to Vienna. The Office regularly met with Mission members who carried out economic and environmental work in the field on their way to or from their Mission areas and continues to remain in almost daily contact with them. In March, the Co-ordinator joined the delegation of the United Kingdom Water Initiative on its trip to Central Asia for meetings with government officials, a number of NGOs, and representatives of key partner organizations. The Office also accompanied the OSCE heads of delegations on their trip to Central Asia in July.

In March, the Office took part in the Regional Conference of Central and Eastern European Countries on Fighting Corruption in Bucharest. The Office, in co-ordination with the Chairperson-in-Office and the ODIHR, also participates in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe's Anti-Corruption Initiative, and the Co-ordinator has been asked by the Chair to act as the focal point in the Secretariat on this issue. The Office participates in an online "virtual forum" on this subject, organized by the World Bank, and it worked closely with the

Chairmanship in planning the informal meeting in March on the rule of law and corruption. In September, the Co-ordinator attended and contributed to a one-day consultative meeting on promoting regional activities in water management in the Central Asian region, held in Geneva. Furthermore, the Office was represented, often at the expense of the sponsor or host, at a number of meetings hosted by international organizations, international financial institutions, NGOs and business fora.

Seminars and workshops also continued to be conducted on specific issues relevant to the regions. A workshop on training of trainers, held in Ashgabad at the end of May, was widely acclaimed. Other events included a series of local seminars on the Aarhus Convention in Kazakhstan that resulted in the signing of a three-party memorandum of understanding between the Government, parliament and environmental NGOs in Kazakhstan. A series of seminars in Uzbekistan on promoting community-level co-operation for sustainable economic and environmental development was similarly well received. The Regional Seminar on Global Environmental Law: Interpretation, Integration and Implementation took place in Almaty from 13 to 15 September. Another Seminar, sponsored by the United Kingdom, on Regional Environmental Problems in Central Asia and the Role of Civil Society, was held on 10 and 11 October in Almaty, and will be followed by a regional Workshop on Translating Policy into Effective Environmental Law: Case Study on Water Pollution Legislation in December.

In preparing for the Eighth Economic Forum, held in Prague from 11 to 14 April 2000, on the theme of Economic Aspects of Post-Conflict Rehabilitation: the Challenges of Transformation, the Office held seminars in Sarajevo (on the environmental impact of conflicts and rehabilitation measures, December 1999) and Tbilisi (on experiences with post-conflict rehabilitation efforts, January 2000). In May, the Office helped to organize a follow-up seminar to the Seventh Economic Forum in Ashgabad.

Since the Eighth Economic Forum, the Office has been involved in a variety of activities related to the recommendations in the Chairperson's summary in different areas, such as practical operational issues and the inter-dimensional approach, Mission co-operation and co-ordination and consciousness-raising and public education. In accordance with the Office's mandate regarding interaction with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Co-ordinator participated in the ninth session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest in July. He explored, together with the incoming Romanian Chairmanship, the possibility of involving the Parliamentary Assembly in one or more of the preparatory seminars for the Ninth Economic Forum.

In accordance with priorities set out in the Austrian Chairmanship's work programme, close consultations with the Chairmanship on the inter-dimensional approach have continued. Examples are the Office's contribution to the ODIHR seminar on children and armed conflict, several UNODCCP conferences and the ODIHR meeting on trafficking in human beings. Also, the Co-ordinator addressed the Permanent Council on 29 June and gave a presentation at the EBRD's annual meeting. On 14 September, in a Permanent Council session focusing on the economic dimension, the Co-ordinator and the Environmental Adviser addressed the Council and gave detailed presentations of the activities of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

In co-operation with the training co-ordinator, and with the active involvement and support of the Austrian Chairmanship, the Office organized a training workshop for Mission officers dealing with economic and environmental issues, which took place from 9 to 13 October at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna. This workshop made possible an integrated and cost-effective approach to training for all Missions in the economic dimension, including exchanges

of lessons learned and “best practices”, and detailed briefings by key partner organizations in the economic dimension. This event took fully into consideration the main points of the mandate with regard to enhancing OSCE’s interaction with relevant international organizations, financial institutions and organizations active in the environmental field, as well as strengthening this aspect of the work of OSCE Missions.

Public education work has also been increased, both in Vienna and in the field, in order to allow for a better understanding of the economic dimension among delegations, international organizations and institutions and NGOs, and in order to inform them about economic dimension activities. The calendar on the website is being updated with greater frequency, and includes even fuller information on upcoming activities in the economic dimension. Interim hard-copy reports now allow non-web-users to be kept regularly informed. The Office gave a number of presentations to student groups, the latest having been students from the University of Illinois in the USA, and a delegation from the *Ecole Nationale d’Administration* in France. The Office also participated in the OSCE Induction Programme.

During July and August, the Office was enriched by the presence of an intern who, together with the Co-ordinator, developed a paper on transparency, good governance and economic matters, which will be published in an academic journal. Another voluntary contribution enabled the Office to hire a consultant to prepare a draft action plan on promoting good governance and transparency which will be presented to the Chairmanship. All these activities form part of the preparations for the Ninth Economic Forum.

Also during July and August, the Office and the Personnel Unit were able to recommend to the Secretary General highly qualified candidates to fill the vacant positions as senior economic adviser and senior economic officer. The two candidates began their work in October.

4.3 Conflict Prevention Centre

The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) has continued to support the overall implementation of OSCE tasks in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Under the guidance of the Secretary General, the CPC has focused on providing support to the Chairperson-in-Office and on following Mission activities, as well as on providing support to OSCE negotiating and decision-making bodies, including the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation.

The CPC underwent a major structural reform during 2000 as a result of Permanent Council Decision No. 364.

4.3.1 Mission Programme Section

As a direct result of Permanent Council Decision No. 364, the Mission Liaison Section was re-organized during the year into the Mission Programme Section (MPS), with the mandate to act as the primary point of contact on all OSCE Mission matters in the OSCE Secretariat. Thus, the MPS was tasked with overseeing and ensuring focused follow-up efforts in respect of all Secretariat activities in support of the implementation of Missions’ mandates.

The MPS has successfully assisted in these tasks, *inter alia*, by actively participating in the work of Secretariat task forces on Kosovo, the Caucasus and Central Asia, by taking an active role in the programme budget process and by carrying out several visits to Missions and

field activities. The Section has also taken an active part in backstopping the co-ordination of regional initiatives and co-operation between Missions themselves. The Section was strengthened during 2000 by the addition of three junior mission programme officers.

Furthermore, at the request of the Chairmanship, MPS staff have also assisted with technical support to political consultations and discussions on Mission mandate issues.

The Senior Security Co-ordinator has in 2000 been fully engaged in harmonizing security procedures in all Missions and proposing additional security measures in many Missions as appropriate. He has taken an active part in meetings of Heads of Missions and has now visited the majority of the Missions, including all the Missions covered by war-risk insurance. Some Missions have had to be visited more than once, owing to local security concerns. The Co-ordinator has also undertaken security reviews at the specific request of other OSCE Institutions, such as the ODIHR. In the Secretariat, he chairs regular meetings of an advisory technical security working group, and he liaises closely with the Situation/Communication Room.

4.3.2 Operation Centre

As a result of the adoption of Permanent Council Decision No. 364 on 29 June 2000, the OSCE Secretariat is committed to undertaking a substantial reorganization in order to be better prepared to meet the number of challenges likely to confront the Organization in the coming years. The decision to carry out this reorganization came about following lessons learned from recent deployments of new field operations, during which the inadequacy of the capacity within the Secretariat to plan and deploy such missions in the most timely and efficient manner had been clearly illustrated. The need for an increase in planning and deployment capacity was affirmed at the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, where the first steps to establish an Operation Centre were taken.

The changes called for in Decision No. 364 were aimed at significantly improving the OSCE's rapid reaction capacity, and significant changes were therefore required in all the departments of the Secretariat. In the Conflict Prevention Centre, the major changes focused on reorganization of the Mission Liaison Section into the Mission Programme Section, and the establishment of an Operation Centre (Opscen).

The major tasks of the Operation Centre are described below.

The first is to serve as a means to help identify potential crisis areas. It will achieve this in a number of ways, including by establishing close liaison links with other international organizations involved in similar crisis-management and conflict-prevention activities.

The second is to serve as a planning cell for future missions and field operations. This will involve drawing up a number of operational and administrative templates in order to cover requirements that may arise.

The third is to act as the co-ordination point during the initial mobilization and subsequent deployment of any future field operations that may be required by the Permanent Council. It will perform this function by working closely with all the other departments in the Secretariat to make possible the most rapid response. It is foreseen that members of the Operation Centre will travel to the new mission area during the initial deployment stage in order to assist other experts from the Secretariat.

The Operation Centre came into being on 4 September 2000 with the arrival of three seconded staff members from France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, all of whom have significant experience in the type of work concerned. The full establishment will consist of five persons, including a head of centre/planner, a military liaison officer, a resources planner, a police adviser and a secretary.

Initial work is well under way under the direction of the Secretary General, and close links are being established with all the departments and partner organizations that the Operation Centre will work with, preceding and during any future deployments.

4.3.3 Situation/Communication Room

The Situation/Communication Room underpins the CPC and Secretariat-wide communication links with the Missions. Despite chronic staffing shortfalls, the seconded Situation/Communication Room team has continued to provide an emergency-response capability, as demonstrated by its active assistance in a dozen medical evacuations from field Missions during the year. Furthermore, the Situation/Communication Room has supported the Mission Programme Section by acting as a point of distribution of reports to the Chairmanship, the OSCE Troika, etc., as appropriate. The Situation/Communication Room plays a valuable role in the monitoring of events, especially during emergencies, in the collection of background information and in the provision of assistance in the preparation and holding of focused briefings in the CPC.

The Situation/Communication Room directly assists the Operations Centre whenever required, e. g. with monitoring of events, or by providing briefing facilities and support. This is operationally important during the build-up of a new Mission, when the Situation/Communication Room will assist the Operation Centre in forming the nucleus from which the co-ordination and briefings will take place.

4.3.4 FSC/CSBM Support Unit (Security Co-operation)

During the reporting period, the FSC/CSBM Support Unit continued its activities connected with security co-operation, as well as other activities related to security, including the security dialogue, small arms, light weapons and communications.

4.3.4.1 Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting

The tenth Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM 2000) of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) took place in Vienna from 28 February to 1 March 2000. As a consequence of the adoption of the Vienna Document 1999 (VD 99) at the Istanbul Summit, the implementation of the Vienna Document 1994 as well as the shift to implementation of the broader VD 99 have been addressed by numerous experts from capitals.

4.3.4.2 Vienna Document 1999

Pursuant to the Istanbul Summit decision on the Vienna Document 1999, the FSC negotiated and adopted the appropriate notification formats in its Decision FSC.DEC 7/00, dated 12 July 2000. After the completion of the required word processing macros, the formats will be used by all the participating States starting on 1 October 2000.

4.3.4.3 Code of Conduct

The information exchange on implementation of the Code of Conduct (FSC.DEC/4/98) took place before 15 April 2000, and provided the basis for four sessions of Working Group A exclusively devoted to assessment of the information exchanged. Numerous requests for clarifications were answered and suggestions for further development of the questionnaire itself have been submitted.

4.3.4.4 Global Exchange of Military Information (GEMI)

On 2 and 3 May 2000, a workshop on automated GEMI data exchange was held in Vienna, preceding the hard-copy information exchange, which took place on 3 May 2000.

4.3.4.5 Other activities

Other activities of the FSC are described below.

4.3.4.5.1 Security Dialogue

In January 2000, the FSC initiated a basic discussion on the security situation in South-Eastern Europe, as part of its Security Dialogue. Keynote speakers from several countries of the region addressed specific questions and provided additional information on regional and bilateral agreements. In May 2000, the FSC Chair summarized and concluded the dialogue and introduced the second topic addressed in the Security Dialogue, which focused on the role of conventional arms control in Europe. After concluding the session at the end of August 2000, the discussion on military doctrines was initiated, with a view to being finalized by the end of 2000.

4.3.4.5.2 Small arms and light weapons

At the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the OSCE started a formal discussion of the problems associated with small arms and light weapons. Recognizing that the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of these weapons have exacerbated armed conflicts and contributed to organized crime, the FSC decided to launch a broad discussion on the issue and to hold a seminar devoted to the examination of concrete measures. During the seminar, which took place from 3 to 5 April 2000, experts from different countries suggested a number of potential roles for the OSCE. These suggestions were then used as the basis for a draft document, which has since guided negotiations in FSC Working Group B. The document, comprising a range of norms, principles and measures on small arms and light weapons, is expected to be agreed on at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Vienna in November 2000. The FSC intends to make a substantial contribution with this document to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and light Weapons in all its Aspects to be held in mid-2001.

4.3.4.6 Communications

On 21 June 2000, the FSC adopted its decision No. 6 on a solution for phase II of the upgrade of the OSCE communications network, which formed the basis for the request for tenders finalized by the project management team (PMT). It is expected that the technical sub-groups of the Communications Group will reach agreement on the technical details of the network upgrade later this year.

In the first ten months of 2000, participating States have implemented the following confidence- and security-building measures: six airbase visits; 63 evaluation visits (of which 12 were on the basis of bilateral agreements); 78 inspections; one demonstration of new types of major weapon and equipment systems; and seven visits to military facilities, military formations, and observations of certain military activities.

4.4 Department of Human Resources

In July 2000, the OSCE Secretariat underwent a reorganization which resulted in the creation of a new department, the Department of Human Resources, merging all aspects of human resources under one area of responsibility. The purpose is to ensure a streamlined approach to human resources management and establish a single authority for all personnel, staffing and training questions. Currently, the Department of Human Resources is made up of four elements: Mission Staffing plus REACT, Personnel, Training and Gender Issues, and is headed by a Director for Human Resources.

4.4.1 Mission Staffing

The Mission Staffing Section (MSS) was established to support the mandate of the Missions and OSCE field activities by delivering the best qualified candidates on time in a transparent, objective and fair way and by supporting the Missions and OSCE field activities in staffing matters. Apart from the recruitment and deployment of staff, the Mission Staffing Section is continuously developing policies and systems for administering staff within the Missions.

4.4.1.1 *Integrated staffing system (ISS)*

In the past year, the Mission Staffing Section has focused on the development and implementation of the integrated staffing system, a transparent and objective selection process based on the qualifications of the candidates and the requirements of the Missions. This system was originally developed for OMIK, but is since the beginning of the year used for all Missions and field activities.

The reason for implementing the new system was the urgent need for a structured and efficient process in selecting candidates for the rapidly growing number of OSCE Missions and their staff. Especially the increase in the number of positions in OMIK and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina requiring specific qualifications made it necessary to have a reliable selection method. The Mission Staffing Section is committed to adopting a more customer-oriented attitude towards Missions, delegations, countries and Mission members, so transparency, objectivity and standardization of the selection process have become prerequisites for optimizing the deployment of qualified professional staff to the Missions and field activities. The OSCE has increased its professional Mission members from 60 (in 1995) to 1,300 (in 2000).

4.4.1.2 *Time frame staffing*

One of the major issues for the Section is to cope with the urgent recruitment and deployment of Mission members. Usually the time frame between issuing a vacancy notice,

receiving nominations from participating States and deploying the selected incumbent is 12 to 16 weeks. Therefore, strategies are under development to increase the OSCE's capacity to deploy Mission members in a very short time frame, and to retain qualified and capable staff in the Missions. Due to the relatively high vacancy rate, some Missions might face problems in implementing their mandates.

4.4.1.3 Performance appraisal system

A performance appraisal system has been developed to assess Mission members' performance so as to provide more solid grounds for decisions on extension requests or for terminating assignments. The performance appraisal system was implemented in the autumn of 2000.

4.4.1.4 Appeals procedure for Mission members

An appeals procedure applicable to international Mission members, either seconded or contracted, was established in July 2000. The Mission members may appeal against any administrative decision prejudicial to them, as well as against any disciplinary measure taken against them.

4.4.1.5 OSCE general Mission manual

A general guide for Mission members was issued in July 2000, designed to impart to present or future Mission members a basic understanding of the tasks and activities of the different OSCE Missions.

4.4.1.6 The REACT Initiative

At the OSCE Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the Heads of State or Government of the participating States decided to take a number of steps aimed at ensuring "a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE area where participating States are at peace with each other, and individuals and communities live in freedom, prosperity and security." To implement their commitment to these objectives, a number of concrete steps were decided on, including the creation of Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT), which would enable the OSCE "to respond quickly to demands for assistance and for large civilian field operations." The Summit recognised that "the ability to deploy rapidly civilian and police expertise is essential to effective conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation." The implementation of the REACT initiative would give the Organization "the ability to address problems before they become crises and to deploy quickly the civilian component of a peacekeeping operation when needed." In the Summit Declaration, the Heads of State or Government requested the Permanent Council and the Secretary General "to establish a task force within the Conflict Prevention Centre aimed at developing the REACT programme and a budget that [would] enable REACT to be fully operational by 30 June 2000."

The REACT Task Force

In early January, the REACT Task Force was established in the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) and began its work. Chaired by the Director of the CPC, the Task Force was

composed of both members of the Secretariat staff representing major elements relevant to field activities (e.g., mission staffing, training, operations, information technology) and a core group of experts in various specialities (e.g., police, personnel, training, information systems) seconded by participating States. This core group was responsible for the day-to-day work on the REACT initiative. Its members operated as a group of consultants, drawing on information and experience from a variety of sources to reach conclusions about and to make recommendations for the implementation of the REACT initiative. They consulted broadly within the Secretariat and OSCE Institutions, with field Missions, with the participating States and with other international organizations with useful “lessons learned” to share, including the United Nations, the Council of the European Union (EU), the European Commission and the Western European Union.

By mid-March, the Task Force had developed some preliminary ideas for making the REACT initiative operational and these were presented to representatives of the participating States in a day-long informal meeting in Vienna organised by the Chairperson-in-Office. The Task Force concluded that three factors could be brought to bear in realising this objective: 1) Standards based on precisely defined qualifications for the work carried out in OSCE field activities which could be applied to better focus the recruitment and selection process. 2) Efficient management of the documentation used in the recruitment and selection process could help overcome a key factor impeding rapid selection of personnel for field assignments. The large volume of documents that must be dealt with in a brief period at the outset of the build-up of a large new Mission or in a surge situation constitutes a major bottleneck. 3) And Pre-selection/pre-deployment training could ensure that those selected would be operationally prepared to carry out their duties upon arrival in the field.

The REACT Concept

Based on the feedback received at the March informal meeting, the Task Force proceeded to develop a detailed concept for making the REACT initiative operational. It was based on three pillars: selection standards, information management, and training.

Standards were to be established in a staffing matrix, based on an analysis of work done in existing OSCE field activities, which divides that work into twelve fields of expertise at four functional levels of competence. This matrix – and accompanying descriptions of the various kinds of work and the minimum qualifications required to do it – is the basis for both a standardised formatted application form and a structured *curriculum vitae*. These documents can be used to capture candidate information in formats that can be easily moved into a softcopy electronic environment, thereby providing the means for overcoming a major impediment to rapid identification, selection and deployment of qualified candidates. That impediment is the time-consuming, labour-intensive manual processes currently used in the Secretariat for handling candidate documentation.

In order to realise the potential of moving candidate information into an electronic environment, however, it would be necessary to create the information technology infrastructure required. This is the purpose of the web-based human resources information management extranet proposed by the Task Force. The 1998 Information Systems Strategy Plan (ISSP) foresaw the eventual adoption of an OSCE unified human resources management system (HRMS), with information electronically available for efficient and effective data exchange between the Secretariat and all components of the OSCE. The Task Force sought to apply the strategic vision of the ISSP in developing the extranet proposal and to do so in a way that would

deliver early functionality for REACT purposes while supporting the Organisation's longer term HRMS objectives.

Finally, both reflecting the wide range of training capabilities and resources available in the participating States and in response to input from the States, the Task Force developed a set of generic training standards which States can use for pre-selection/pre-deployment training should they be in a position to conduct such training. These standards cover the skills and knowledge that those assigned to OSCE field activities will need to be operationally prepared and effective. They are also designed to be complementary to standards of other international organizations, including the United Nations, so that States carrying out in-country training programmes need not make them unique to OSCE requirements.

Permanent Council Decision No. 364

The concept was presented to participating State representatives at a second informal meeting in Vienna in early June, following which the OSCE Permanent Council began the process of formulating a decision which, *inter alia*, would endorse the concept and provide the budgetary resources required for implementation. Permanent Council Decision No. 364, adopted on 30 June 2000, called for implementation of the REACT programme, in the shortest possible time, in the context of the implementation of other measures, including a unified HRMS, designed to enhance the operational capacities of the Secretariat. Toward this end, a REACT/HRMS Implementation Steering Committee, responsible to the Secretary General, was established in the Secretariat in early July.

Composed of major Secretariat stakeholders, this committee was charged with overseeing the implementation process. Several sub-project working groups were formed under the committee's aegis and made responsible for development of staffing policies and procedures; design, construction and testing of the information management architecture required; and training issues. As of early September, an overall work plan had been developed and sub-project teams were hard at work. By mid-October the REACT Implementation Team had developed the system definition and design approach to the Mission Staffing Section's information system. These were presented to representatives of the participating States at an informal meeting in Vienna where the content, procedures, business processes and functionalities of the system were described.

The overall objective is to achieve a significant degree of system functionality by the time of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in late November.

4.4.2 Personnel

4.4.2.1 Policies and procedures

On 20 July 2000, the Permanent Council, by approving the revised staff regulations and rules for fixed-term staff in the OSCE Secretariat and institutions, ensured better conditions of employment and gave the OSCE a tool for more successful recruitment and longer retention of qualified staff already on board. The OSCE conditions of employment are now similar to those of other international organizations and provide entitlements such as rental subsidy, repatriation grant, and education grants for university studies, etc. Within the framework of the further strengthening of OSCE operational capacities and in order to implement the interrelated and complex aspects of the decisions concerning REACT, a unified human resources management

system (HRMS) is being established. Continued efforts have been undertaken to regulate the conditions of service for local mission staff.

4.4.2.2 *Social security*

Better social security arrangements for local staff in small Missions were devised in collaboration with the firms Generali Worldwide and Van Breda & Co. International, and have been introduced in Armenia, Georgia and Turkmenistan.

In view of the obvious need for health coverage for seconded staff in the OSCE Institutions as an open alternative, the optional health insurance coverage that exists for seconded staff in Missions has been extended to allow participation of staff seconded to the OSCE Institutions.

4.4.2.3 *Recruitment*

The pressure generated by the establishment of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) and the overall expansion of OSCE operations, including the establishment of 37 new posts in the OSCE Institutions and 60 contracted posts in OMIK, has been maintained throughout the reporting period. During the first nine months of the year, 41 staff members separated from the OSCE, including 11 staff in OSCE Missions. The recruitment for that period amounts to 88 new staff members, including 17 contracted staff in Missions.

4.4.2.4 *Internship programme*

The internship programme continued, and 28 interns were assigned, to the OSCE Institutions, during the reporting period, including four interns from the Central Asian countries. The Government of Norway expressed its willingness to fund a human rights training/internship programme, which is being finalized and will be implemented this autumn.

4.4.2.5 *Post classification*

The job classification review initiated in 1998 continued this year, and on 15 June 2000, the Permanent Council, in its Decision No. 360, approved the latest progress report. In 2000, the classification of the posts in the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions will be nearing its end. However, it is envisaged that the classification will continue next year for the newly established posts and for the posts requiring a second review as a result of changes in the Organization.

4.4.3 *Training and capacity-building*

The implementation of the strategy on capacity-building through training continued during the reporting period. On 22 and 23 May, the first meeting on focal points for training took place in Vienna. Twelve representatives from OSCE field activities and one OSCE Institution adopted conclusions aimed at improving the co-operation in and co-ordination of all training-related issues in the OSCE. Considerable differences in the area of training became evident between the three larger OSCE Missions, medium-sized Missions and small OSCE field activities. The different training needs must therefore be addressed in a differentiated way. The role of the Training Section and the Secretariat as service-provider for the Missions, field operations and Institutions regarding training was highlighted during the meeting. Among the conclusions adopted by the participants were the following:

- Training in the OSCE needs a sincere, universal and well publicized commitment on the part of senior management throughout the OSCE;
- In order to streamline communication on training within the OSCE, the Missions, Institutions and field operations should address any training-related questions to the Training Section in the Secretariat;
- The Training Section will keep the Missions, Institutions and field operations updated on training-related issues through a newsletter.

In the framework of REACT, training standards for preparation of OSCE Mission staff were developed. The standards are intended to make possible a unified and standardized approach to Mission preparation training provided by participating States. The standards were published by the end of October. A first meeting of national training experts was convened in Vienna on 17 July in order to discuss the standards, their impact on the recruitment and deployment of future Mission members and the future co-operation between the Training Section of the Secretariat and participating States. The meeting was attended by 40 participants from 20 OSCE participating States. All the participants agreed that the meeting has provided an opportunity for a useful exchange of information on training in the OSCE area, which should be continued. In addition, it also provided a unique forum for establishing networks of pre-mission training institutions, enabling them to engage in a division of labour and to open their courses to participants from participating States that are not able to offer their own pre-mission training.

As a follow up, a concept paper on capacity-building and training was submitted to delegations by the Austrian Chairmanship and discussed in the Informal Financial Committee's meeting on 19 September. The discussion helped to clarify of the Secretariat's approach to Mission preparation training, as well as training activities in the OSCE.

In 1999, the induction course for new Mission members and new staff in the Secretariat continued. In the second half of the year, Mission Staffing organized a separate induction programme for future Mission members of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) at the Vienna World Trade Centre. Altogether, 390 future OMIK members took part in this programme. Early in 2000, the two induction courses were merged and the new induction programme has been held every second week at the Hofburg Congress Centre. As of 31 October 2000, 23 induction programmes had taken place, with a total of 716 participants. Besides the incoming administrative processing of new Mission members, the main purpose of the induction programme is to convey a corporate identity as well as basic knowledge of the OSCE, its Institutions and field activities. To this end, the existing OSCE overview and Mission overview modules were further improved and other modules developed. Most modules exist as PowerPoint presentations in order to increase flexibility by reducing the dependence on individual presenters for the induction courses. Relevant parts of the modules are also used for public information purposes.

The next steps will be to develop the modules into a self-study version to be used, for example, by local staff in the field Missions and also a version that can be used in national training programmes in participating States. In developing further modules, the above-mentioned training standards will be applied, thereby ensuring unity of message and an even quality in such efforts.

In spring 2000, altogether eight half-day training seminars and one full-day training session for OSCE Secretariat staff were conducted by seconded trainers, covering such fields as

effective communication and interviewing skills, presentation skills, stress management, team-building and conflict resolution and analysis and negotiation. These seminars were very well received by the 162 participants. Further training of this type for Secretariat staff is planned for the second half of 2000.

Following an initiative by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, at the session of the OSCE Permanent Council in June 1998, the OSCE has continued to participate in the development of a joint approach to human rights training for field Missions. Apart from the OSCE Secretariat and the ODIHR, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in this co-operation. A human rights training needs assessment mission to Kosovo took place in OMIK between 29 May and 2 June, with the participation of representatives from the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UNHCHR and the EU. In their report, the participants suggested further development and strengthening of human rights training in OMIK in particular, and in all the other OSCE field activities in general. OMIK and the Training Section in Vienna will follow up on these issues.

Apart from the training materials mentioned above, materials are produced for each training event. This material is collected centrally in the unit for co-ordination and training in the Secretariat, so as to make it available for future training activities. The Section is collecting training materials from OSCE Missions, other international organizations and NGOs. In the context of the implementation of REACT and the new human resources management system, a website on training and a database will be installed and made accessible at the latest by the end of 2000. The Website and the database will help to ensure a permanent flow of information between OSCE field activities, participating States, international organizations and relevant NGOs. These activities are an essential part of the efforts to establish a training resource centre that would support training efforts in the OSCE and in participating States.

Between May and July 2000, the Information Technology Services organized a series of training seminars on PC applications open to all OSCE staff in Vienna. Because of a lack of resources in the IT Services (staff and training facilities), the training was outsourced. After reviewing several offers from training institutes, it was decided to hold the seminars at the IBM training centre in Vienna, which was selected as one of the most cost-effective and professional vendors. The objectives of the training were to increase the efficiency of computer use in the Secretariat and to acquaint users with the new operating system and the new suite of office applications (Office 97) in use since the end of 1999, in order to establish a common level of user skills for standard office software. As existing PC skills vary widely, participation in the training programme was voluntary. In all, 164 staff members took part in 47 full-day and 15 half-day seminars. Each of these staff members participated in an average of three seminars. Staff members were generally quite satisfied with the content and quality of the seminars. The training has perceptibly increased PC skills and the efficiency of computer use among Secretariat staff. Further seminars might be organized should adequate resources be made available. In addition, the Training and Capacity-Building Section is also planning to co-operate more closely with staff in the Missions (especially smaller missions which do not have a dedicated training unit) to evaluate the need for, and the feasibility of, PC applications training for Mission members.

4.4.3.1 Training in the large Missions

The resources allocated to training in 2000 were concentrated on the field Missions reflecting the principle laid down in the strategy that training should be carried out as close as

possible to the actual activities of the Mission, in order to ensure that it is relevant. The central training funds are limited to activities that should be carried out centrally. In the 2000 budget for the smaller Missions and field activities, training funds were combined with funds for projects, which led to a considerable confusion in the use of these resources. From 2001, all field activities will have separate training accounts, which will allow a better co-ordination and control of these resources.

Since the lion's share of the training funds in the OSCE is used by the large Missions, their training activities may merit special mention. Unfortunately, in OMIK as well as in the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, training activities by the unit responsible for training are not co-ordinated with staff training in the different departments. In order to bring about a better co-ordination of training throughout these two missions, a guideline for the co-ordination of training activities in large Missions has been prepared.

The Mission Training Section of OMIK was established to build and maintain Mission capabilities. The training process includes needs assessments, training delivery and evaluation. The focus of overall training activities has been on the conduct of 40 Mission-specific induction courses for all new international staff and national staff. These courses provide new staff with an overview of OMIK's mandate, its fulfilment by the various departments and the socio-political, historical and security circumstances prevailing in Kosovo. In order to respond to specific training needs, Mission-wide training needs assessments have been conducted. Generic training has been offered for national and international staff in the following areas: language training (English, Albanian and Serbian), communication skills, effective meetings, working with/as an interpreter, computer skills (in English, Albanian and Serbian), conflict-resolution skills (understanding conflict, conflict analysis and conflict mapping and basic skills in negotiation, facilitation and mediation), training for security staff and defensive driving. To ensure continuity of training activities and to build up a local training capacity, it has been important to identify key staff with the potential for developing training skills and an interest in doing so. Once a critical mass of such staff has been identified, specialized "train the trainer" programmes will be conducted to make it possible to provide additional training in cross-cultural awareness, presentation skills and evaluation techniques.

The implementation of the comprehensive training strategy in the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated in 1999 continued in 2000. The training delivered was designed around the target areas identified in the OSCE strategy for capacity-building through training and tailored to the specific needs of the Mission. The activities organized by the Training Section in Sarajevo have been concentrating on improving the skills of Mission staff, national as well as international, with the aim of improving specific skills in areas such as use of Microsoft Office software, professional office techniques, management and report-writing. These training programmes were offered to a variety of staff from the head office, regional centres and field offices. In November 1999, in co-operation with other agencies, the Mission organized two joint ventures: first aid training with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and negotiation and conflict prevention skills training, which was developed and implemented with the United States Institute of Peace.

The Welcome Programme for new Mission Members is an ongoing activity, which orients new staff for their assignment to the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Human Rights Department as well as the Departments for Democratization, Elections, Regional Stabilization, Press and Public Information and Media Affairs organized numerous internal and external training activities on a variety of subjects.

The OSCE Mission to Croatia has a well-developed training programme that comprises induction training and specific induction for police monitors. Training for regional centres is carried out at regular intervals, as is administrative and information technology training. Particular emphasis is placed on training activities on human rights, support to civil society and negotiation/mediation/facilitation. A senior staff seminar for around 25 senior staff from the Mission headquarters and co-ordination centres will be organized in October/November 2000.

4.4.4 Gender Issues

In 2000, the Secretariat's Gender Adviser continued to develop the OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues, which was approved by the Permanent Council on 1 June 2000 (PC.DEC/353). Under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of Liechtenstein, the Informal Group on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men held seven meetings during the reporting period, starting with the first meeting in December 1999. The Gender Adviser assisted the Chairperson in these meetings and provided the necessary information for discussion of the background, methods of analysis, content and structure regarding the Action Plan.

The Plan describes the tasks related to the implementation of OSCE's obligations regarding equality issues. It is a set of guidelines for the OSCE field operations as well as for participating States regarding actions to be taken in order to promote the status of women. In its first part it refers to opportunities for women in the OSCE, gender-awareness training for staff members, the establishment of gender-adviser posts within the Organization and the periodical review of achievements. In the second part, it calls for actions to be taken in the field operations and by participating States in order to promote a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of commitments and the fostering of the human rights of women. Subsequent to its approval by the Permanent Council, implementation of the Action Plan started with the appointment of a co-ordinator and focal points for gender issues in the OSCE field operations, who will promote and support the development of gender-related projects in the field.

The section on gender issues in the bi-weekly induction course for new Mission members was further enlarged to cover new developments regarding gender issues in the OSCE area and in OSCE field operations. New Mission members are made aware for the need for a gender-sensitive approach in their work and are given a briefing on gender analysis. They are given information on the status of women in the different host countries and on gender-related projects. Regarding the importance of a professional working environment where all staff members are treated equally and with respect regardless of sex or other personal characteristics, the briefing provides incentives for interactive discussions which enhance team spirit.

With regard to the work environment policy in the Organization, a first training course for mediators was held in December 1999, and a second one in October 2000. These mediators, who have been appointed to the different field operations, were trained to deal with the internal procedures for the settlement of possible cases of harassment or discrimination and to provide counselling for staff members at an early stage in complaints. The Gender Adviser has been dealing with several cases of harassment and has assisted the Mission concerned in each case in finding a solution. She has also further reinforced contacts with Mission members in order to analyse their concerns regarding gender issues, in both internal and external matters.

The Gender Adviser attended several international conferences, including the twenty-third special session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, which reviewed the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. These conferences provided opportunities to establish and renew valuable contacts with other international organizations,

NGOs and other gender specialists. The continuous exchange of information on gender-related issues is important for the implementation of the Action Plan on Gender Issues, which foresees co-operation and co-ordination with other actors in the field, in order to strengthen efforts and avoid duplication. Furthermore, through the contacts with other experts and specialized organizations, a large collection of specific material was gathered and made available for training of Mission members.

With a voluntary contribution from the Canadian International Development Agency, guidelines have been developed for gender awareness in post-conflict situations, and are being used for specific training of Mission members dealing with human rights issues. The guidelines address gender-related topics such as violence against women, equitable participation in peace processes and civil society, as well as equitable access to economic resources in societies in transition. The training is aimed at improving the ability of Mission members to integrate these issues into project planning and management. After a first round of training, the material will be edited and published for further distribution in the field.

Efforts are being made to promote the importance of gender issues in the work of the Organization, not only among its staff members but also for a wider public. The Gender Adviser has addressed various meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, international organizations and academic institutions, and has contributed to a radio programme on the role of women in conflict resolution. The post of the Gender Adviser that had been filled by secondment in 1999, was included in the established post table of the Secretariat for the year 2000. This change was necessary to guarantee continuation of gender mainstreaming and has helped to support the belief that the human rights of women are a fundamental aspect of the Organization's work.

4.5 Department of Support Services and Budget

During the period covered by this report, a restructuring of the Secretariat took place in order to strengthen its operational capacities. As a result, this Department changed its title from the Department of Administration and Operations to the Department of Support Services and Budget, and Personnel was moved to the newly created Department of Human Resources.

The main task of the Department continued to be provision of support for OSCE missions and field activities, in particular the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. All the sections and units were involved in supporting the Missions and considered it as a priority in their work programme. The reporting guidelines issued to Missions by the Conflict Prevention Centre provide for an administrative report. A report format was prepared and distributed to all small Missions that will henceforth submit quarterly administrative reports to the Secretariat.

In terms of staff development, the establishment and implementation of better working conditions for OSCE staff members was achieved, and this will in turn lessen the turnover of staff and make it possible to recruit better qualified individuals. Furthermore, the Department prepared an organization directive establishing a procedure to be applied for the elections of the Secretariat staff representatives and specifying the terms of reference and guidelines for the functioning of the Secretariat Staff Committee.

In order to stay abreast of the measures taken to improve the Organization's capacity for planning and staffing large Missions at short notice, initiatives were taken to ensure a similar capacity for equipping the Missions with material goods. The proposed Rapid Operational Support Actions furnish models to this end.

The Department of Support Services and Budget produced two manuals: the General Guide for Mission Members and the Style Manual. The Guide for Mission Members is aimed at new and existing staff in OSCE field activities and provides them with information and guidelines on life in the Mission, ranging from personnel issues to security instructions. It is distributed during the induction programme and is available in Missions and on the OSCE website. The Style Manual establishes a set of guidelines for writing documents, letters and other correspondence and creates a corporate strategy for the OSCE in all its documentation. An administrative instruction was issued for international Mission members to define terms, conditions and limits for compensation in the event of loss of or damage to their personal effects and to set forth the procedures for the submission and examination of claims in connection with such loss or damage.

Co-operation with other departments in the Secretariat has improved and taken on a more structured approach. This is particularly true in the case of the Conflict Prevention Centre. Weekly inter-departmental meetings are attended by senior staff from both departments, and several specific task forces have been set up to deal with topical questions.

4.5.1 Conference Services

4.5.1.1 Overview

Conference Services (CS) provides regular services to the OSCE, the Joint Consultative Group (JCG) of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and the Open Skies Consultative Commission. In addition, CS provides support and service for OSCE-related meetings, seminars and workshops held in co-operation with other international organizations and bodies, both at the Organization's Headquarters in Vienna and abroad.

The reporting period was again characterized by an increasing number of meetings to be serviced, in particular informal meetings related to the Permanent Council. During the reporting period, from 1 December 1999 to October 2000, Conference Services will have serviced close to 1,700 meetings:

- Permanent Council meetings and related PC consultations: approximately 630;
- Forum for Security Co-operation meetings and related FSC meetings: 350;
- Joint Consultative Group (JCG) and Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC): close to 150 meetings;
- Meetings on specific topics held by regional groups/groups of OSCE participating States: 530;
- Briefings for other organizations, student groups, academics and research institutions have increased over 14 per cent, to approximately 120.

Major conferences and seminars were serviced during the reporting period in and outside of Vienna, such as the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, a meeting on small arms and light weapons, meetings related to the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE's activities in Sarajevo and Tbilisi, the Eighth Economic Forum in Prague, meetings for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary

Assembly and meetings related to Articles II, IV and V of the Dayton Agreement and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, as well as others.

During the second half of 2000, Conference Services assisted the OSCE Chairmanship in the planning and preparation of the Ministerial Council meeting to be held in Vienna in November 2000. Numerous additional meetings and related working groups in preparation for the ministerial meeting were serviced, including drafting and reporting for the Chairmanship and the Secretariat.

4.5.1.2 *Special activities*

As a gift by the Austrian host country to the OSCE on the occasion of its OSCE Chairmanship, the Neuer Saal, the main meeting hall used by the OSCE at the Hofburg in Vienna, was renovated. During the period from March until the end of August 2000, meetings normally held in the Neuer Saal area were moved to the Redoutensaal and adjacent facilities, the premises originally occupied by the CSCE until a fire in 1992 destroyed the building. It was rebuilt and reopened in 1998. Upon completion of the newly renovated conference room, the Neuer Saal was inaugurated at the end of August.

At the beginning of 2000, after completion of the language conforming process, all the documents adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999 were printed and published in the six official OSCE languages: The Charter for European Security, the Istanbul Summit Declaration, the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence-and Security-Building Measures, the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and other related documents.

Furthermore, Conference Services also assisted in the preparation and organizing of the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act held on 19 July 2000 in the Redoutensaal. In honour of the 25th anniversary, items such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, baseball caps, and pins commemorating the anniversary, as well as those with the regular OSCE logo, were sold and will continue to be available.

In collaboration with the Secretariat Personnel Unit, an official OSCE staff manual for incoming staff members to the OSCE was another project completed during the reporting period. New staff members will use this manual as a guide during their first few months in their new duty station.

Other activities of the Conference Services included the preparation of the annual OSCE Ball, which was attended by approximately 1,100 participants. Proceeds from the Ball were donated to the *Malteser Hospitaldienst* in support of their work with the handicapped, and the OSCE Mission to Moldova for the project for renovation of the children's ward of the Bendery Psycho-Neurological Hospital in Moldova.

4.5.1.3 *Meetings assistance and documentation*

The Conference Services supported the chairpersons of various OSCE and related bodies with advice on policy and procedures, drafted records and summaries of meetings for internal and external distribution, prepared draft decisions and official journals and co-ordinated the compilation of official OSCE documents.

Meetings support and documentation included – apart from the registration and distribution of documents and the reproduction, archiving and retrieval of past documents at the request of delegations and institutions – co-ordination of room bookings, servicing of meetings and liaison with the Documents Control and other sections and units of the Secretariat with regard to the translation and/or editing of OSCE documents. This accounted for more than 6,000 documents distributed during the reporting period and more than 25 requests received on an average each day.

4.5.1.4 Language Services

The considerable growth in the volume of interpretation services is reflected in the information provided in the overview. During the reporting period, over 11,000 pages were translated and edited by the Translation and Editing Unit and over 16,000 pages of documents were processed in one or more of the six official OSCE languages. Among the major documents translated were the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Charter for European Security and the Vienna Document 1999. In addition to the conference documents, the *OSCE Newsletter* and the *OSCE Handbook* were translated; the OSCE decisions manual 1999 was compiled and reports and draft resolutions were translated for other OSCE institutions and bodies, such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the ODIHR and the HCNM.

4.5.2 Finance Services

4.5.2.1 Finance

In 2000, there were considerable substantive developments in the finance area, with the introduction of the new financial management system in conjunction with the successful Y2K preparedness of all finance-related transactions. In addition, for the first time since the establishment of the OSCE, a monthly closure of accounts was introduced Organization-wide from July 2000.

However, the external auditors in their audit report of the 1999 financial statements highlighted weaknesses in financial and material asset management, and commented on the treatment of unliquidated obligations. These weaknesses are being corrected during 2000 and it is anticipated that the external audit report for 2000 will acknowledge measures taken to avoid a recurrence of this situation.

4.5.2.2 Budget

The 2000 unified budget approved by the Permanent Council on 15 December 1999 (PC.DEC/331) amounted to EUR 191 million. In addition, the Permanent Council approved the following decisions:

Description	Amount (EUR)	PC Decision No.
Border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia up to the end of April 2000	1,012,300	335
Establishment of an OSCE field office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan	231,900	339
Joint Registration Task Force – Mission in Kosovo	5,526,800	343
Expansion of the border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia from May to mid-September 2000	2,017,300	346
Supervision of the general elections – tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,975,200	351
Strengthening of the OSCE capacity – REACT	1,787,191	364
Strengthening of the OSCE capacity – Operation Centre	72,100	364
Strengthening of the OSCE capacity – human resource management	44,300	364
Supplementary budget for the border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia from mid-September to mid-November 2000	844,200	368
Total	18,511,291	

All the above decisions brought the total OSCE budget for 2000 to EUR 209 million. The 1999 OSCE budget for a total amount of EUR 153.5 million, as at 31 December 1999, showed an implementation rate of over 95 per cent.

4.5.2.3 Accounting

The report of the external auditors for the year ending 31 December 1999 stated that the financial statements appeared to fairly reflect the financial position of the OSCE as at 31 December 1999 and the financial results of the operations for the period then ended. The financial statements were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The financial transactions reflected in the statements were effected in accordance with the Financial Regulations, budgetary provisions and applicable directives and financial instructions, except for major weaknesses in the control of material assets, which caused the external auditors to issue a qualified audit report. In addition to a number of recommendations for improvements, the external auditors specifically drew attention to the treatment of unliquidated obligations in 1999, which will require an urgent in-depth review, and the issuance of a financial instruction.

The audited financial statements for 1999 were submitted to the delegations of participating States in June 2000, and were accepted by the Permanent Council on 20 July 2000 (PC.DEC/365). The Permanent Council noted with concern the weaknesses in financial and material asset management highlighted by the external auditors, as well as their observations and comments regarding the treatment of unliquidated obligations. The Permanent Council Decision included several requests to the Secretary General designed to address the above issues during the third quarter of 2000.

On 8 November 1999, the OSCE introduced a new financial and material management system (FMMS, Oracle database) for the Institutions and a selected number of Missions/field activities. For technical reasons, introduction was postponed for the Mission in Kosovo until 19 January 2000. Given the complexity of the system, its implementation was carried out in record time with limited financial and human resources.

A major change was introduced into the 1999 accounts with the revision of the format and presentation of the financial statements. The new format separates the accounts into logical parts, and provides a clear distinction between activities financed out of budgetary and extra-budgetary funds.

In July 2000, the Organization started to close its accounts monthly with two months arrears (May period closed by the end of July, June period closed by the end of August). This is a significant step towards enhanced monitoring of the budget implementation rate by budget managers, better control of transactions, and more timely financial reporting to participating States.

4.5.2.4 Cash management

Payables, receivables and cash management modules were installed for the new Oracle financial system. Arrears procedures in accordance with the Financial Regulations were implemented in order to reduce the amount of outstanding contributions (Financial Regulation 4.09, on Actions in the event of arrears). It is worth noting that the OSCE does not hold any working capital to finance arrears and therefore the full and timely payment of contributions is a matter of critical importance for the proper functioning of the Organization.

New bank accounts were established for the OSCE Missions and field offices in Albania, Azerbaijan, Kosovo and Yerevan.

In order to cope with the increased volume of transactions, a network version of electronic banking was installed. Deposit interest conditions were obtained for the Secretariat current accounts in order to maximize bank interest. Further to the evacuation of Kosovo Verification Mission members, 1,139 claims in respect of lost property were processed.

4.5.3 Mission Support Service (MSS)

4.5.3.1 General

The Mission Support Service (MSS), previously called the Operations Service, accepted and successfully met an ever-increasing number of challenges during the period covered by this report. Support to the large OSCE Missions and, in particular, to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK), provided the biggest sustained challenge to MSS, but the establishment and expansion of the border monitoring operation of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and the opening of new OSCE Offices in Yerevan, Armenia; and Baku, Azerbaijan, added to the overall workload of the Service.

4.5.3.2 Procurement

The tremendous growth in the MSS's workload may best be illustrated by a simple comparison of procurement actions over the past three years. From 1 January until 30 June 1997, the procurement staff processed and procured goods and services requested by means of 743 procurement requests submitted by the Missions with a total value of EURO 4,491,762. These requests were handled by one professional and four general service staff members. During the same period in 2000, 2,690 procurement requests were processed, with an aggregate value of EUR 25,701,922, by two professionals and six general service staff members. Many of these acquisitions involved complex tender procedures that led to detailed

contracts. The increasing requirement for detailed contracts led to the request for and the inclusion of a new professional position, i.e., that of contracts officer. This position was included in the 2000 mid-year budget request and has been approved.

4.5.3.3 Communications

The Communications Section in addition to meeting all of the OSCE Missions' normal communications requirements, was also confronted with increasing demands and tasks. Improved direct communications links were established with OMIK headquarters, and projects to expand direct microwave links with the regional centres in Kosovo are well underway. Also during this reporting period, the challenge of providing reliable communications to the Georgia border monitoring operation was successfully met with the provision of reliable satellite communications.

4.5.3.4 Asset management – supply

The considerable growth in the Mission Support Service's activities brought with it new management challenges. Taking into account that all the acquisitions referred to above also had to be inventoried, shipped and managed gives a better picture of the total effort expended by the Service during this reporting period. The MSS's Supply Section has been particularly challenged by new requirements. The new Oracle material management system (MMS) was introduced in late 1999 to improve the management of the OSCE's ever-increasing fixed asset resources. In conjunction with the introduction of the MMS, all of the Missions were requested to conduct a full physical inventory of their fixed assets to ensure comparability and congruence between the assets database in the Secretariat and that of the Missions and field activities. This proved to be a massive undertaking, since virtually the entire inventory had to be manually entered into the new MMS database. By the end of October 2000, this project was still in progress and was expected to be completed by 31 December 2000.

In addition to providing asset management services to the Missions and field activities, the MSS also assumed a new role of assisting the other OSCE Institutions in the management of their fixed assets. This is a new task that will involve uploading records of all the Institutions' fixed assets into the central database. Close co-operation between the Secretariat and the other Institutions will be required.

4.5.3.5 Transportation

The MSS also became an active manager of a growing air support operation. Twice weekly, shuttle flights are operating between Vienna and Kosovo and two chartered helicopters are operating in support of the Georgia border monitoring operation. During the first six months, the MSS' Transportation Section also continued to provide support to weekly flights to the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, operated in close co-operation with the Swiss Headquarters Support Unit in Sarajevo. This service was terminated at the end of June.

4.5.3.6 MSS direct technical support

In addition to its normal activities, the MSS provided direct technical support to the Missions by deploying some of its staff members. Two staff members formed an advance team to set up the new OSCE Office in Baku. During a two-week deployment, they completely furnished and established the Office in preparation for its official opening by the Chairperson-in-

Office. Other staff members were frequently deployed to assist, in particular, OMIK's procurement activities, as well as its vehicle and supply management. To ensure a close working relationship with OMIK, the MSS instituted biweekly co-ordination meetings that proved very helpful in easing the difficult tasks of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

4.5.3.7 Rapid Operational Support Actions (ROPSA) initiative

The lessons learnt from the KVM experience gave rise to a number of ideas aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of the OSCE, in particular in relation to the establishment of large Missions, including the REACT initiative and the Operations Centre. These initiatives foresee a substantial improvement in the Organization's capacity to establish a large field activity in terms of human resources and the planning capacity for such activities. In order to reach their objectives, a similar breakthrough initiative was launched with regard to the provision of equipment, goods and services. The Rapid Operational Support Actions are based on schemes for the delivery of goods and services to match the rapid deployment foreseen under the strengthened human resources capacity and a thorough review of all operational policies and procedures to this end. The following are designed to increase dramatically the capacity of the Organization to start, build up and maintain the operational support for a large-scale field activity:

- (a) The national module concept;
- (b) The Mission start-up kits;
- (c) The standing administrative core group; and
- (d) A review of current operational policies and procedures and adjustments required for rapid deployment.

An in-house task force has also been established to explore how the above can be implemented in the most efficient manner, and to ensure that all relevant questions are addressed.

4.5.4 General Services

4.5.4.1 Administrative services

As a result of the great increase in staff in the Secretariat, the Administrative Services Unit's Administration, Travel and Procurement sections have again experienced a significant increase in their activities.

In the Travel Office, three factors have predominated: the increased recruitment undertaken by the Personnel Unit and the travel related to the interviewing and hiring of new staff, the impact of the first large rotation of Mission members from the Mission in Kosovo and the substantial travel activity with respect to the OSCE's tasks in Central Asia.

The Administration and Procurement Section experienced an increased workload as a result of the greater processing activities in connection with incoming Secretariat staff, a substantially increased level of Mission-member training and procurement of the supplies

required in support thereof, and the establishment of office infrastructures, (i.e., planning, co-ordination and procurement work) resulting from the acquisition of new office premises.

4.5.4.2 Records management

The Records Management Unit had to cope with a significant increase in workload during the reporting period. This is largely due to the assignment of new tasks to the OSCE after the Istanbul Summit, the reorganization of the OSCE Secretariat, and the opening of Offices in Baku and Yerevan. The Records Management Unit provided assistance on matters in its area of competence to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Work on the streamlining of records management and the introduction of an electronic data management system has begun. Retirement of records has become necessary, and many files have been moved to the archives. The overall number of files registered has been approximately 15,500 in 2000.

The increase in OSCE activities and in the number of field Missions has given rise to a dramatic increase in the amount of mail being processed through the OSCE Secretariat. Approximately 230 kg of mail were received every week through the Austrian postal services and courier companies. Outgoing mail to all OSCE field Missions and OSCE Institutions has amounted to approximately 204 kg per week, (15,425 mail items) in 2000.

Training and advice for new staff in the Mission mailrooms was given continuously throughout the year, especially to the Mission in Kosovo.

4.5.5 Information technology

4.5.5.1 General and technical support

The Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP) is undergoing a thorough revision, the pace of which was accelerated in response to Permanent Council Decision No. 364 (PC.DEC/364) on the subject.

A new computer server room was set up at the Stallburg location to serve the Conference Services and the financial/materials management system project network. New computer network segments were added to the Secretariat network infrastructure at the Kärntnerring location (2nd and 5th floors of Kärntnerring Hof and 2nd and 6th floors of Palais Corso) to cover the Secretariat (including the REACT team) and Article II & IV requirements. In addition, more than 100 new desktop computers were acquired and deployed to replace outdated systems and to provide desktop computers for new employees.

The Internet security scheme using a firewall that was installed last year in the Secretariat is being extended to the large Missions. Standards have been reviewed and issued for about 80 per cent of the information technology hardware and software. The issue of Organization-wide licensing of end-user software is being addressed.

Clustering of the computers used for the financial/materials management system implementation has been initiated to ensure a very high level of system availability in the event of a hardware or software failure.

To increase the visibility and availability of the OSCE web site, a web mirroring project was initiated. An OSCE-wide study was conducted to identify the best GroupWare solution to meet the OSCE's requirements.

The transition to the year 2000 was very smooth throughout the Secretariat and the Missions and the investment in hardware and software to replace non-compliant elements paid off. Information technology support was provided to other areas of OSCE, such as Articles II & IV and Article V staff, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High-Level Planning Group.

4.5.5.2 Management information systems

An integrated financial management and material management system (Oracle applications) was implemented OSCE-wide in November 1999. This system solved the year 2000 problem of the previous financial application and through the use of new technology has significantly improved the exchange of administrative information between the Missions and the Secretariat. The system is used in 12 OSCE locations by about 250 users, connected to the data centre in Vienna using Internet technology. The concept of a centralized database accessed by Internet technology has been confirmed both by users and by IT experts as being extremely business-efficient and cost-effective.

The need for an integrated and unified human resources management system (HRMS) was identified in the Information Systems Strategic Plan. The REACT initiative has further underlined the need, necessitating the first phase of implementation (an interim solution covering surge recruitment of Mission members (REACT), and normal replacement of Mission members), which is to be completed by the end of 2000. The requirements for a unified HRMS/payroll system were defined and a tender for the software was published in August 2000.

The requirements for an OSCE-wide document management system were defined, and a tender was published. The evaluation of bids is currently in progress. A pilot implementation is planned for 2000; the full implementation will be phased over the years 2001 and 2002.

To cater for the new budget format, a new budget publishing application was developed and deployed in conjunction with the Budget Unit. The Mission Staffing database was enhanced and adapted to the changing needs.

4.5.5.3 Missions support

Various OSCE Missions and Institutions (Presence in Albania, the HCNM office, the Prague Office) received assistance for building up their IT infrastructures (desktop PCs, LANs, Internet access, data communications), so as to improve their IT capabilities. Particular assistance was given to OMIK for the development and stabilization of its computer network and the infrastructure for the elections and regional centres. The IT Service assisted in the introduction of a wireless local area network in OMIK, and a network operating system OSCE-wide.

The second Mission/Institution IT staff seminar was held in Vienna in June. All the large Missions and the Institutions participated in this event, which helped to improve co-operation and sharing of knowledge.

The long-standing issue of the warranty covering computers for the Missions was resolved, and warranty/maintenance handling procedures were established for the large number of computers installed. Establishing a new service facility and obtaining a commitment from the vendor to solve future problems as a matter of the highest priority were addressed.

4.5.5.4 Training

A considerable amount of training was provided to Mission staff on the FMS/MMS systems, both in Vienna and on-site at the Missions. For the first time, systematic training was arranged for the Secretariat staff in MS Office and other standard software used and was much appreciated. Two NetWare training courses were arranged for the OMIK Mission personnel.

4.5.6 Prague Office

In existence since 1991, the Prague Office is the OSCE's depository of conference documents issued since 1973 by various negotiating bodies, during events such as Summits, expert meetings, informal committees and specialized seminars. This legacy is continuously maintained and updated, and segments of it are compiled by qualified staff in order to consolidate the knowledge embodied in the documents. The Office is an integral part of the Secretariat, and has its place and its role to play in many important projects for streamlining information from the creation of a document up to its public release. In addition, the Office offers its premises and technical support, as well as access to most conference documents to individuals enrolled in the Researcher-in-Residence Programme. Because Prague used to be the venue of meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials and the Senior Council, it was kept as the regular venue for meetings of the Economic Forum. Thus, the staff of the Prague Office also prepare and service this event every year, in association with the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the OSCE Conference Services and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The daily workload with which the Prague Office is entrusted, is closely linked with activities carried out by three other sections and services of the Secretariat (the Press and Public Information Section, and the Documents Distribution and Documents Control services). Close workflow co-ordination, e-mail transmittal and format conversion of digital files are making possible the timely posting on the web of Permanent Council journals and decisions, as well as all the other documents available in the on-line document library. The monthly mailing of *Newsletters* and the e-mail notifications advising subscribers of newly posted documents are also the fruit of team work by Vienna and Prague.

The mailing operations by the Prague Office are now divided into three categories. Postal mailings are dispatched every month to 2,741 subscribers, who receive the current issue of the *OSCE Newsletter* in the language of their choice and a listing of newly released documents, (such as journals, decisions, reports issued by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, recommendations, articles and releases by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and publications produced by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, etc). Subscribers to this postal mailing list can order the documents of their choice by filling out a ready-to-use form and returning it to the Prague Office. These order forms are processed individually so as to best target the specific interests of each subscriber.

The second category consists of 60 depository libraries designated by participating States (or subscribing individually). This group is supplied once a month with hard copies of all the documents on the list of new releases. Currently, 43 countries (including the USA, Canada and

Japan) have one or more OSCE depository libraries, which are continuously supplied with new materials.

The third category is the electronic advisory system, which consists of short notifications regularly informing an average of 300 subscribers of journals, decisions, on-line versions of the *Newsletter*, or reports newly posted on the web. The review of the mailing operations during 2000 improved their dissemination capacity by targeting subscribers' specific interests and ensuring the availability of official documents in a timely manner.

The hard-copy records deposited in Prague have been systematically registered and referenced and are currently being bound into hard-cover, sequentially numbered books. Each book has its own list of contents, which are cross-referenced in registries, logs and indexes. Of the documents issued between 1973 and 1986, 80 per cent have also been captured on microfiche, and the original electronic versions and converted archive documents are kept in a digital archive. This digital archive serves as a root for the on-line document library on the OSCE website (www.osce.org/docs), mentioned previously. Under the oversight of the on-line manager, the Prague Office is *inter alia* responsible for the new structure of this electronic reference collection. In the course of this year, 2,400 files have been processed and reviewed on this site. Most collections of documents are now available in each of the six OSCE official languages in two different formats (HTML and PDF). According to formal statistics, 60,356 visitors browsed the document library pages from January to September, and 260 requests related to documents published on the web site have been answered since the docs@osceprag.cz service was installed in March 2000.

On an average, the Prague Office answers approximately 180 requests for documents or information each month, in addition to inquiries handled by the Press and Public Information Section. Special care is devoted to requests from members of delegations, OSCE staff, academic experts and specialized agencies. The daily practice of searching for and retrieving documents, and compiling them according to topic, subject and country or conflict area has strengthened the institutional memory resource of the Prague Office. This has made it not only a source of knowledge in the domain of documentation at the service of the OSCE and the public worldwide, but also an optimal location for the Researchers-in-Residence Programme.

The Prague Office set-up and the Office's small team dedicated to the support of researchers have proven to create an environment conducive to research work for graduate and post-graduate students writing papers and theses, scholars, academic workers, historians researching the beginnings and evolution of the OSCE and experts in the political sciences who come to Prague for a few weeks to three months at a time to conduct their research. Candidates are selected on the basis of their project outlines and specific documentation needs. Once an application has been approved and dates agreed upon, the researcher is provided with appropriate tools for his or her project and compiled documents pertaining to the line of study. Individual counselling and advisory sessions are designed on a one-to-one basis for programme participants writing a thesis, defending a theory or drafting a study. Since 1997, the Prague Office has welcomed 45 researchers-in-residence from 39 countries, including Australia, China, Korea, Pakistan and South Africa. One third of these researchers worked on MA or PhD theses, ten of which are entered as separate items in the book, brochure and periodical reference library of the Prague Office. In the past year, 12 interns took turns in assisting permanent staff in their daily duties and 28 applications were turned down. About 200 visitors (including student groups from the Czech Republic, Germany and the United Kingdom) came to the Prague Office with information inquiries or just to consult the Helsinki process collections and other documents.

IV. REPORT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, established as part of the “institutionalization” of the CSCE at the 1990 Paris Summit, occupies a unique place in the Organization’s structure. The Assembly’s primary task is to support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in the OSCE’s participating States, to develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and to contribute to the development of the institutional structures of the OSCE and of relations and co-operation between existing OSCE Institutions. A dialogue aimed at further strengthening ties and co-operation between the intergovernmental and parliamentary OSCE branches has usually been positive and productive. The President of the Assembly has participated regularly in the Ministerial Troika meetings and has always addressed the OSCE Summits and Ministerial Council meetings. The Assembly’s International Secretariat, located in Copenhagen, has worked closely with the OSCE Secretariat and the other OSCE Institutions.

1. Istanbul Summit

The vital role that the Parliamentary Assembly now plays in the OSCE was recognized at the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, when the Heads of State or Government of the OSCE participating States adopted the Charter for European Security, which states:

“The Parliamentary Assembly has developed into one of the most important OSCE Institutions continuously providing new ideas and proposals. We welcome this increasing role, particularly in the field of democratic development and election monitoring. We call on the Parliamentary Assembly to develop its activities further as a key component in our efforts to promote democracy, prosperity and increased confidence within and between participating States.”

The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Degn, addressed the Summit and stressed the problem of the democratic deficit in the OSCE and called on the governments to improve the Organization’s transparency and accountability. Degn also highlighted the importance of changing the Organization’s decision-making procedures in order to eliminate the single-country veto. The Assembly’s Bureau had met just before the OSCE Summit, and several of its members were present at it.

2. Annual session

At its ninth annual session in Bucharest in July, the Assembly focused on OSCE challenges in the 21st century – good governance: regional co-operation, strengthening of democratic institutions, promotion of transparency, enforcement of the rule of law and combating of corruption. Nearly 300 parliamentarians from more than 50 countries met to deliberate and adopt the Bucharest Declaration, covering a wide range of political, economic and human rights issues and including resolutions on specific topics. The resolution on Belarus called on all sides to pave the way for free and fair parliamentary elections in Belarus that would be worthy of international recognition. The Assembly expressed its concern regarding the stalemate in the negotiations on the status of Trans-Dniestra and emphasized the need for a

common State for all the peoples of Moldova. The Assembly adopted a resolution on the situation in Chechnya, calling for a political solution to the conflict, as well as the earliest possible return of the OSCE Assistance Group. On trade in arms and weapons, the Assembly passed a resolution calling for a convention regulating the trade in arms and the establishment of an international body with jurisdiction over any violations of the convention. The Assembly also discussed shortcomings in the OSCE's recruitment policies and adopted a resolution calling for reduced reliance on secondment in the long-term field Missions. On economic and environmental issues, the Assembly appealed to all the OSCE participating States to honour their commitments under the Kyoto and Århus proposals. Other resolutions included appeals to abolish the death penalty for all crimes, to preserve the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, to ensure freedom of the media in the OSCE region, to combat corruption and to fully implement the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe under OSCE auspices.

As usual, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, with the OSCE Secretary General and the leaders of various OSCE Institutions, addressed the annual session in Bucharest and answered questions directly from the floor. The session was also attended by observers from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the Assembly of the Western European Union, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC) and the Nordic Council. Adrian Severin of Romania was elected by acclamation as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to succeed Helle Degn. The Assembly also elected three Vice-Presidents, including Gennady Seleznev, Speaker of the Russian *Duma* who was elected to a second three-year term and Rita Süßmuth, former President of the German *Bundestag*, and Nino Burjanadze, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Georgian parliament, who were both elected for three-year terms. In the First General Committee, Hastings from the USA was elected Chair; Lenmarker from Sweden was elected Vice-Chair; and Bársony from Hungary was re-elected Rapporteur. In the Second Committee, Floch from France was re-elected Chair. Bilorus from Ukraine was elected Vice-Chair, and Haering from Switzerland was re-elected Rapporteur. In the Third General Committee, Weisskirchen was re-elected Chair; Simonides from Poland was re-elected Vice-Chair; and Mizulina was elected Rapporteur.

3. Annual briefing in Vienna

At the beginning of every year, the Standing Committee, which is composed of the heads of delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, meets in Vienna at the OSCE Headquarters in the Hofburg Congress Centre. In January 2000, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the OSCE Secretary General and the heads of other OSCE Institutions met with members of the Standing Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during their meeting in Vienna and briefed them on the latest developments in the Organization's work. This briefing provided the parliamentarians with the latest information about OSCE activities, while answers to questions from the floor ensured a vital direct link between Members of Parliament and the OSCE leadership. At their meeting in Vienna, the members of the Standing Committee debated the results of the Summit Meeting in Istanbul, as well as reports on the Assembly's election observation missions in Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Russia.

4. Election observation

The Parliamentary Assembly has continued to make important contributions to the OSCE election observation efforts. The co-operation agreement between the Assembly and the ODIHR, signed in Copenhagen in September 1997 by the Chairman-in-Office and the President

of the Assembly, was designed to enhance the working relationship between these two important OSCE Institutions. In accordance with this agreement, the Chairperson-in-Office, on the basis of a nomination by the President of the Assembly, appointed senior Members of Parliament as his/her Special Representative to lead election monitoring operations and to present the conclusions of the observer teams. Since December 1999, the Assembly has carried out election monitoring missions in Croatia (January 2000), Kyrgyzstan (February 2000) and the Russian Federation (State *Duma* elections in December 1999 and Presidential elections in March 2000). All of these missions were led by the President or a Vice-President of the Assembly acting as the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office.

Early in 1999, the Parliamentary Assembly established an *Ad Hoc* Committee on Election Monitoring in order to devise an effective mechanism for following up recommendations made after election observation missions and to design a common election monitoring strategy for the international community. Since then, the Assembly has undertaken follow-up missions to Georgia, Kazakhstan and Russia. Most recently, in September 2000, Ihor Ostash, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly, travelled to Astana, Kazakhstan, to moderate a round table on elections, organized in conjunction with the OSCE Centre in Almaty and the ODIHR, and with the participation of Kazakh parliamentarians, government officials and representatives of civil society.

5. Presidential activities

During 1999, the President and other senior representatives of the Assembly continued to undertake official visits and missions in order to promote OSCE principles, to establish closer ties with Assembly members and to contribute to the development of democratic institutions in the OSCE region. By the end of her second term in July 2000, President Degn had visited each of the OSCE Institutions, 15 long-term field Missions and 19 OSCE participating States. On numerous occasions, including the meetings of the Troika, the Ministerial Council, the Permanent Council and notably at the Istanbul Summit, the President emphasized that transparency, accountability and openness are essential elements of a modern international organization and stressed the need to tackle the democratic deficit of the OSCE as well as the need for change in the consensus rule. In particular, during the second year of her presidency, several other new initiatives were undertaken in order to pursue the aims of the Assembly in developing and promoting mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Prominent examples are the parliamentary *ad hoc* working groups and democracy teams on Belarus, Kosovo, Moldova and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The President continued to strengthen the Assembly's relations with other parliamentary institutions by addressing the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of the European Parliamentary Assemblies in May 2000 in Strasbourg.

Adrian Severin, who was elected President in July 2000, emphasized in his inaugural statement to the Assembly that his main priority would be to make the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly the most important source of vision and the primary advisory body for the OSCE governmental institutions. In August, Severin delivered his first address as President to the Permanent Council. He elaborated on his primary goals and advocated the need to reform OSCE decision-making mechanisms in order to build the OSCE into a better, more effective, and more respected international organization.

6. *Ad hoc* committees, working groups, democracy teams

During the past year, the work of the democracy teams or parliamentary teams, which has added a new and growing dimension to the Parliamentary Assembly, has been intense and has made a positive contribution to the overall work of the OSCE. During repeated visits to Minsk, the Democracy Team on Belarus has continued to pursue its aim to facilitate dialogue between the Government and the opposition in Belarus, which it is hoped might result in free and fair parliamentary elections and assist in the development of democracy. In addition, early this year, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe agreed to join forces in a Parliamentary Troika to co-ordinate and intensify their activities in Belarus in close co-operation with the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in the country. Since its establishment early this year, the Parliamentary Team on Moldova visited the country in February and June. Resolving the status of Trans-Dniestra is a particular priority of the Parliamentary Team.

The Chairs of the Democracy Teams on Belarus and on Moldova have reported on their activities to the Permanent Council in Vienna. The Democracy Teams on Kosovo and on the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe held preparatory meetings on the margins of the ninth annual session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest. In August, the Democracy Team on Kosovo visited the area for the first time.

In August President Severin appointed Vice-President Bruce George to chair a bureau working group which will examine the rules of procedure of the Assembly in the light of recent experience.

7. Conferences and seminars

In January 2000, a Seminar on Strengthening Parliamentary Defence Committees in Bosnia and Herzegovina was held in Bled, Slovenia. The Seminar was co-hosted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participating Members of Parliament from Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Slovenia and the United Kingdom presented the experiences of their national parliaments concerning the functioning of parliamentary defence committees and the democratic and parliamentary control over the armed forces. A total of 24 Bosniac, Croat and Serb members of both the entity parliaments and the BiH parliament participated in the Seminar, along with government officials and representatives of the entity armed forces.

In April, more than 80 parliamentarians representing 32 OSCE participating States attended the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Seminar on New Risks and Challenges: Minorities in the 21st Century, which was held in Antalya, Turkey, in April 2000. The Seminar highlighted the role that parliamentarians can play in seeking to develop co-operative strategies for solving current and future ethnic and political problems. The parliamentarians debated the development of a free press, issues connected with the economic discrimination of national minorities and as legislative means of ensuring equal opportunities for minorities. The Antalya Seminar was the fifth OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Seminar, designed to enhance OSCE involvement at the Interparliamentary level. Previous Seminars were held in Tbilisi (1995 and 1999), Vienna (1997) and Tashkent (1997).

In October, the Parliamentary Assembly held a Seminar on Organized Crime and Corruption in Limassol, Cyprus. The two-day Seminar consisted of a series of presentations and discussions on various aspects of the topic, including the distorting effects of organized crime and corruption on economic development and the process of post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as international strategies to combat crime and corruption.

8. Other activities

Since 1 December 1999, regular meetings of the leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly have taken place, in Vienna (standing committee), Antalya (expanded bureau), Bucharest (bureau, standing committee, annual session) and Limassol (expanded bureau).

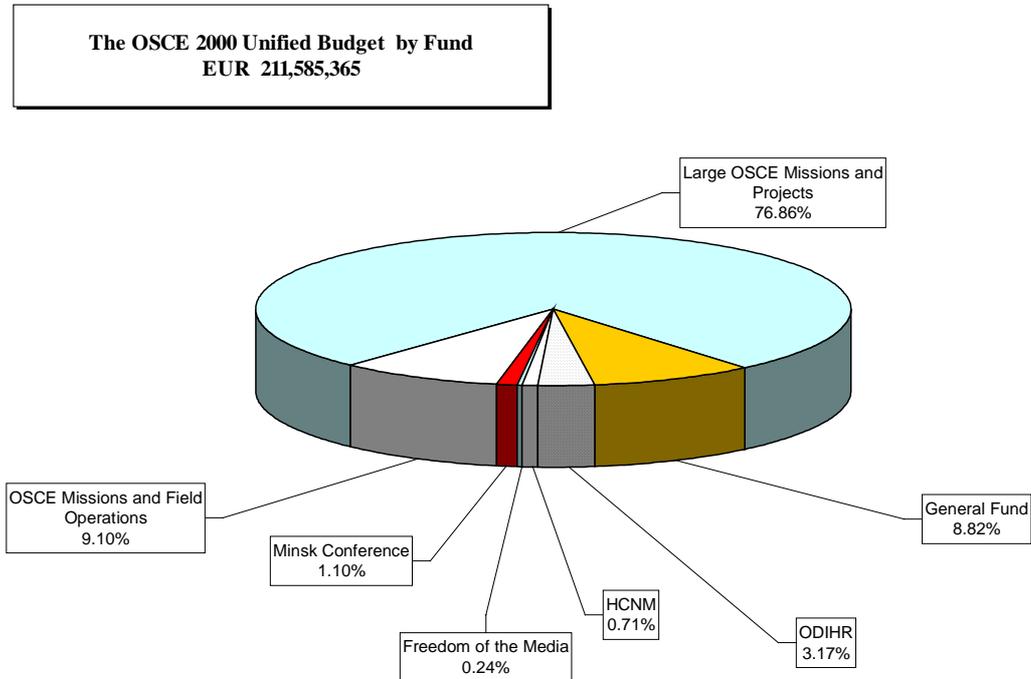
In keeping with an established tradition, the Secretary General of the Assembly, Spencer Oliver, addressed the Permanent Council on 20 July on the results of the ninth annual session in Bucharest.

The Parliamentary Assembly awarded the fifth OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to the Russian reporter Andrei Babitsky, who has reported on the conflict in Chechnya and has been one of the very few critical voices commenting on the situation and developments in the region.

The Assembly also continued to intensify its International Research Fellowship Programme at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat in Copenhagen. Fellowship positions for graduate students are for a six-month period, but may be extended for up to one year. The Fellowship Programme is now in its sixth year. More than 75 research fellows from all over the OSCE region have come to Copenhagen to gain practical experience in the field of international politics. The Assembly, in turn, has benefited from an increased capacity to carry out in-depth research and analysis.

ANNEX I

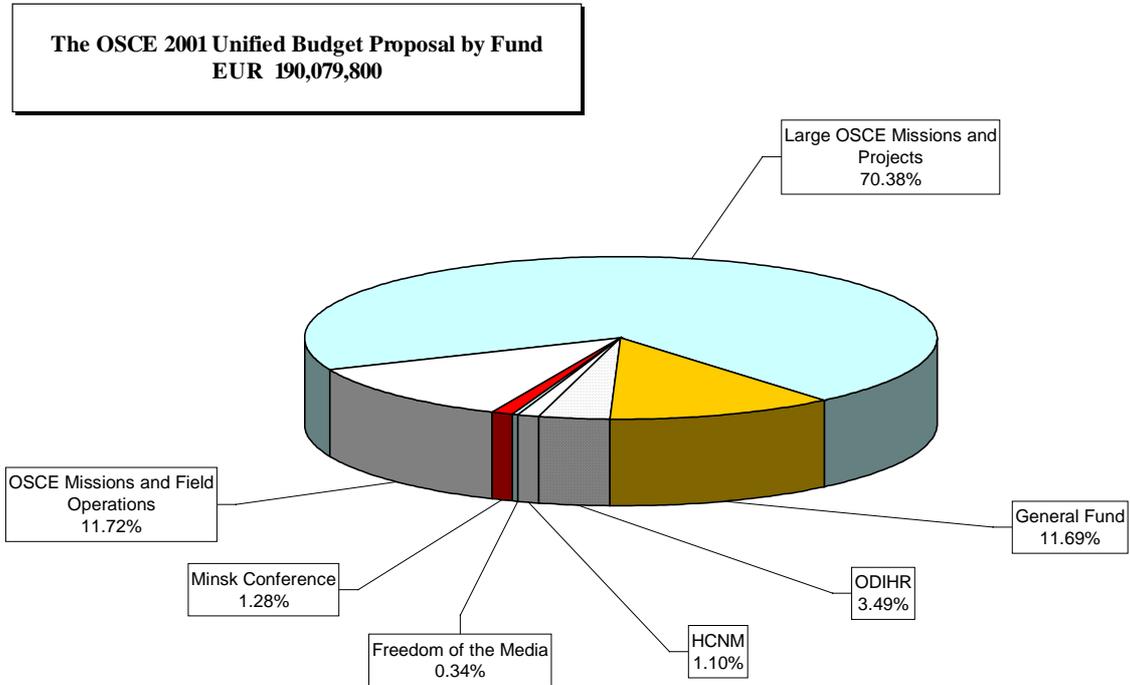
The OSCE 2000 Unified Budget



2000 UNIFIED BUDGET	EUR	%
General Fund	18,681,991	8.82%
ODIHR	6,697,430	3.17%
HCNM	1,502,700	0.71%
Freedom of the Media	515,300	0.24%
Minsk Conference	2,319,900	1.10%
OSCE Missions and Field Operations	19,262,300	9.10%
Large OSCE Missions and Projects	162,605,744	76.85%
TOTAL	211,585,365	100.00%

ANNEX II

The OSCE 2001 Unified Budget Proposal



2001 UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSAL	EUR	%
General Fund	22,219,200	11.69%
ODIHR	6,638,500	3.49%
HCNM	2,091,300	1.10%
Freedom of the Media	647,800	0.34%
Minsk Conference	2,437,700	1.28%
OSCE Missions and Field Operations	22,285,100	11.72%
Large OSCE Missions and Projects	133,760,200	70.37%
TOTAL	190,079,800	100.00%