

## OSCE Support to Humanitarian Agencies in Kosovo Refugee Crisis



OSCE/Szandelszky

*Refugees arriving at the Blace border station in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

The rapidly evolving refugee crisis in Kosovo and surrounding countries which began at the end of March took on enormous proportions. During the month of April, approximately 700,000 people fled or were expelled from Kosovo, while hundreds of thousands more were reported to have been displaced from their homes inside Kosovo. At the end of April, the number of refugees in Albania was reported to be 371,000 and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 154,000.

When, at the end of March, refugees from Kosovo started streaming over the borders to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in their tens of thousands, it quickly became clear

that the local resources of international aid organizations were overwhelmed. There was not enough personnel on the ground and emergency stocks in place were insufficient. Since the recently evacuated OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was the only international organization with a substantial number of people, vehicles and equipment in the area, the OSCE decided on 1 April to use its KVM personnel and equipment to support the efforts of the humanitarian agencies. In consultation with the UNHCR, a task force was dispatched to Albania with vehicles and equipment, while another one was assigned to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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At the end of April, the total strength of the remaining KVM was 337. Of these, 181 were fully occupied with assisting the humanitarian effort – 75 in Albania and 106 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The responsibilities of the two task forces were similar, but not exactly the same, taking into account the different circumstances and environment prevailing in the two countries.

#### **Albania**

The main responsibilities of the KVM task force in Albania have been to provide logistical and administrative support to the UNHCR, to alert specialist agencies to needs and concerns and to gather human rights information.

The flow of aid into Albania has reportedly been ten times faster than that coming into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, since aid deliveries by sea have proved to be much more efficient than air supplies. The problem in Albania, however, was the transportation of the aid from the ports to the inland locations where the refugees were. Here, the OSCE KVM task force formed the key logistical link between the aid convoys and their representatives inside Albania. The task force organized itself

into three groups, North, Central and South, with a headquarters in Tirana and with teams in all 12 prefectures of the country.

### **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the OSCE KVM task force has been deeply involved in supporting all UNHCR activities while at the same time assisting other relevant agencies, like UNICEF. The OSCE KVM has been engaged in the registration of refugees, in assisting the UNHCR with the management of refugee camps, in providing administrative and logistical support and in gathering human rights information from refugees.

The OSCE KVM has maintained a 24-hour presence at the border in order to monitor the influx of refugees and to provide early warning of new mass ar-



*Ambassador William Walker, Head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, with Albanian refugees in the Bojane camp in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

rivals. The border presence also serves the purpose of facilitating the speedy registration of refugees and their transportation away from the border area. The OSCE KVM also contributes to the running of the UNHCR Co-ordination Centre in Skopje. A big effort has been put into supporting the UNHCR in the management of the large Stenkovac refugee complex, consisting of two separate refugee camps. The almost desperate conditions in these camps, resulting from the huge and sudden influx of refugees, have been vividly described in the media. On 24 April, the OSCE KVM reported that, in Stenkovac 1, only three food distribution points were serving a refugee population of 26,000. The camp was seriously overcrowded, with only 9 square meters allocated per person.

The process of registration of refugees has been one of the most pressing tasks in the OSCE KVM support effort. A

decision was made to register all refugees in the camps rather than to concentrate only on those being selected for outward bound flights to host countries. Registration had previously been done in order to get "passenger lists" for outgoing flights. This practice, however, had a potential for violence and unrest, and a separation of the registration procedure from the selection of passengers had therefore to take place.

Teams of KVM human rights specialists have been carrying out extensive interviews with refugees and have collected statements indicating grave human rights violations committed by Yugoslav forces, para-military groups and armed civilians against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. By the end of April, 250 statements had been taken, which was considered a sufficiently broad range to allow for an analysis of trends in human rights violations. The statements paint a picture of total lawlessness and an almost com-

plete absence of any form of protection for ethnic Albanians inside Kosovo. A press release by the OSCE KVM on 20 April listed a number of human rights violations, including forced displacement, killings, physical abuse, sexual assaults, torture, harassment and intimidation. The statements will be shared with relevant international bodies responsible for investigating crimes against humanity.

### Planning for the Return

While this intensive work was going on, the core group of the KVM, based in Skopje, continued to plan for a possible return of the Mission to Kosovo. Planning was based on the assumption that the OSCE will be given a key role in the implementation of a peace agreement, as foreseen in the draft Rambouillet Agreement. On 28 April, the OSCE

Ministerial Troika reiterated the readiness of the OSCE "to serve as a co-ordinating framework and to take on a substantial responsibility for the implementation of a political settlement in Kosovo". The Ministers stressed that the Kosovo conflict threatened stability and reform in the neighbouring countries, and they supported the development of a broad-based strategy to promote regional stability.

## Chairman-in-Office Visits Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk of Norway visited Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 6 to 7 April. The purpose of the visit was to assess how the OSCE could best assist the countries in coping with the refugee crisis and to underline the solidarity of the international community with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

During his visit Minister Vollebæk met with Heads of State and key government officials in the two countries. He expressed his deep respect for the way in which Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had tried to meet the humanitarian crisis unfolding in their countries, and understanding for the negative effects these problems had on the economic and political processes of reform. He pledged his continuing

support to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and underlined that he would use every opportunity to stress the need for a broad international commitment to meet this challenge. He finally urged the two countries to continue their efforts to alleviate the humanitarian disaster.

The visit to the border areas in North Albania and to the Stenkovec refugee camp in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, convinced him that the international community was facing one of the largest refugee disasters in Europe since the Second World War. But, as Mr. Vollebæk stated, "there should be no doubt that the international community recognizes the scale of the challenge. The relief effort being organized by UNHCR, supported by a range of other organizations, shows the basic and enduring solidarity we feel with the refugees from Kosovo and with the people of Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia."

The Chairman-in-Office also chaired meetings of representatives of humani-



*Mr. Knut Vollebæk and Ambassador Daan Everts, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, at the border between Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*

tarian and other international organizations engaged in refugee relief operations, with a view to improving the speed and effectiveness of international support for the refugees from Kosovo.

In Skopje Minister Vollebæk urged the Government to establish a 24-hour crisis co-ordination centre, with participation by all relevant actors, national and international. Such a crisis coordination centre comprising all international relief agencies is now being established.

In Albania the Chairman-in-Office visited the crisis co-ordination centre that had already been set up in Tirana and met with the representatives of the “Friends of Albania” (FoA) Group in Tirana. He was left with the impression that the Group was showing its worth also in connection with the humanitarian crisis. The FoA served both as a source of information and co-ordination as regards immediate relief priorities, and as a means of



Stein J. Bjørge, Aftenposten/SCANPIX

*OSCE Chairman-in-Office Knut Vollebæk visits Stenkovec refugee camp in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

contact between the international community and Albanian authorities.

During his stay Minister Vollebæk pledged economic support for Albanian authorities to enable them to deal with the refugee crisis. In co-operation with the Ministry of Local Government and

the OSCE Presence, the most immediate needs on both central and local government level have now been identified, and resources are now being channelled to Albania through the “OSCE Chairman-in-Office Quick Reaction Fund for Albania” which was established in Vienna in January of this year.

Mr. Vollebæk also met with OSCE personell active in assisting refugee relief operations in these two countries. Mr. Vollebæk stated his hope that the OSCE assistance would contribute to meeting some of the immediate needs as far as organization of the relief effort was concerned. The scale of the humanitarian disaster is, however, of such a magnitude that

stronger efforts may be needed from relief organizations. Mr. Vollebæk stated that “given the magnitude of the task facing us there is a considerable need for coordination of the relief effort. While the brunt of the burden falls on the UNHCR, all other organizations and institutions must contribute.”

## **Federation Ombudsmen of Bosnia and Herzegovina Address the Permanent Council**

On 15 April the Federation ombudsmen of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Ms. Vera Jovanović, Mr. Esad Muhibić and Ms. Branka Raguz – addressed the Permanent Council. Since 1994 the ombudsmen have been working to protect human rights and basic freedoms in the Federation and to eliminate the consequences of ethnic cleansing. The ombudsmen deal with individual violations of human rights

and work towards eliminating discriminatory laws and regulations. Each year, the ombudsmen forward to the OSCE their annual reports on the situation regarding human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The ombudsmen reported that despite some improvements, progress in the area of human rights had slowed down.

Investigations carried out by the ombudsmen have shown that the administrative authorities at all levels are obstructing development in the area of human rights and are the main perpetrators of human rights violations.

Specifically, the ombudsmen drew the attention of the Permanent Council to almost daily interruptions of the work of



the Parliament and to the failure to enforce laws already adopted, particularly with regard to the return of refugees. The ombudsmen emphasized the need for the international community to keep up the pressure on Federation authorities. Property laws, which are a legal precondition for the return of refugees, were adopted only after the international community had exerted pressure on the relevant authorities. The implementation of these laws also required constant pressure. So far, out of the 50,000 filed claims for repossession of pre-war homes and apartments, only 2,65% have been decided in favour of the applicants.

The ombudsmen also stressed the need for establishing a truly independent

judicial system. Citizens, especially those belonging to ethnic minorities, still distrust the courts. In this regard the ombudsmen welcomed the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1184 (1998) establishing a programme of observation and assessment of the judicial reforms taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ombudsmen also pointed out that the current reform of police activities had to be continued in order to bring police performance into accordance with international standards.

On a positive note, the ombudsmen informed the Permanent Council that the credibility and standing of their institution has improved. In the last year alone, the ombudsmen received some 80,000

complaints of violations of human rights, which resulted in 8,000 investigations. In 45% of the cases the appropriate authorities followed the recommendations put forward by the ombudsmen. The ombudsmen also stated that co-operation between the ombudsmen, the Office of the High Representative and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina had become even closer. Joint investigations of human rights violations were carried out, and led to joint action in several cases.

In closing the ombudsmen thanked the OSCE participating States for the political and financial support of their work, and urged them not to allow their attention to be diverted from developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## OSCE Mission to Ukraine

The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Ukraine ended on 30 April 1999. The Mission was established on 15 June 1994 and began working in November of the same year. The principal areas of Mission activity were concerned with the status of Crimea as an autonomous part of Ukraine and the return to Crimea of over 250,000 deported people and their descendants.

### Mission Activities

Based in Kyiv and with a branch office in Simferopol, the Mission was mandated to provide regular reporting on all aspects of the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, or on factors influencing it, and to work towards the solution of the problems of this area. The Mission was also authorized to make suggestions to the appropriate authori-

ties for the solution of existing problems. A round table organized in May 1995 in Locarno (Switzerland) at the initiative of the OSCE Mission and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) contributed considerably to improving the dialogue between the authorities in Kyiv and Simferopol on outstanding issues. The Mission also actively supported and contributed to the March 1996 round table organized by the HCNM in Noordwijk (Netherlands) for the purpose of reconciling the Crimean Constitution with the Constitution of Ukraine. The Mission has provided legal advice to the Ukrainian Government and the Crimean authorities on the legal framework for an Autonomous Republic of Crimea within the Ukrainian State.

The Mission's work also related to issues associated with Crimea's multi-ethnic

population and with the return to Crimea of over 250,000 deported people and their descendants, the overwhelming majority of whom are Crimean Tartars. A round table organized by the Mission and the HCNM in Yalta (September 1995) provided a useful opportunity to start reviewing the various existing problems. Since then, the Mission, working closely with the HCNM, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Program, has been monitoring the implementation of Ukrainian legislation on the acquisition of citizenship by Crimean Tartars and has been working to provide resettlement assistance. For example, the Mission and the UNHCR are working with the Ukrainian and Uzbek authorities to publicize the modified citizenship regulations

concerning the relinquishment of Uzbek citizenship, an issue that affects some 65,000 Crimean Tartars among the scattered deportee communities on the peninsula. In June 1998 a second international donor conference, chaired by the HCNM, Max van der Stoep, raised several million dollars for use in helping with the reintegration of former deportees. This is part of a long-term assistance process.

The Mission was also given the task of monitoring and promoting free media principles and organized a number of seminars, conferences and workshops relating to economic and environmental issues in Ukraine.

#### **Successful Implementation of Mandate**

With the active assistance of the OSCE Mission, including its Branch Office in Simferopol, the Government of Ukraine and the local authorities in Crimea have been able to normalize their relations. On 31 December 1998 a Constitution for

the Autonomous Republic of Crimea – consistent with the Ukrainian constitution and earlier approved by the Supreme Soviet of Crimea – was adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament. The situation on the peninsula has also been positively influenced by the ratification of the Agreement on Friendship and Co-operation between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Important steps have likewise been taken with regard to the question of citizenship and the integration of returning Crimean Tartars.

#### **Future Forms of Co-operation between the OSCE and Ukraine**

In December 1998 the Permanent Council requested the Chairman of the Council to initiate consultations on future forms of co-operation between the Ukrainian authorities and the OSCE institutions, taking into account the positive achievements in the implementation of the mandate of the OSCE Mission.

In January 1999, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador Øyvind

Nordsletten as his Personal Representative to assist in concluding these consultations. Ambassador Nordsletten met with members of the government and representatives of the presidential administration in order to identify the basis for new forms of co-operation. Consultations were also held with the Ukrainian delegation to the OSCE and with OSCE institutions. All parties expressed an interest in further developing and strengthening the constructive relationship between Ukraine and the OSCE.

Accordingly, the OSCE Permanent Council decided, on 30 April, to establish an OSCE expert group for a period of one month. By 1 June 1999 the group will prepare a memorandum of understanding outlining the modalities of further co-operation, which will be signed by the Government of Ukraine and the OSCE. By the same date a mandate providing the basis for the implementation of these forms of co-operation will be adopted by the Permanent Council. The expert group will include the members of the present OSCE Mission to Ukraine.

## **Seminar on Regional Environmental Problems and Co-operative Approaches to Solving Them - The Case of the Baltic Region**

From 26 to 27 April 1999, the OSCE, together with the Government of Germany, held the final subregional Seminar in the series of four designed to prepare participating States for this year's Economic Forum. Representatives of 16 OSCE participating States, as well as many international organizations and NGOs from throughout the Baltic Region, took part in the Seminar, which took place in Warnemünde, Germany.

Participants expressed the opinion that the Baltic Region offers many excellent examples of economic and environmental co-operation and co-operative approaches to solving regional problems, with many success stories; however, several serious challenges and problems still need to be addressed. One such problem is full implementation of the many environmental agreements and conventions that have the potential of reducing the risk of conflict.

At the seminar, the environmental aspects of security were emphasized, especially in terms of the role of the OSCE in conflict prevention. In that context, the importance of "the prevention principle" – as applied to both political and environmental problems – was discussed. With regard to countries in transition in the region, the absence of legal frameworks governing a variety of activities was noted, ranging from genetical engineering to public access to information

and public support for NGO activity. As some of these countries move quickly towards EU membership and other forms of greater integration with the international community, it is important that they be given the wherewithal to comply

with their commitments in these areas. It is equally important to avoid building new barriers in the region and to help those countries moving less quickly in this direction to build the necessary legal structures.

There was broad agreement among the participants that the OSCE should consider follow-up activities aimed at transferring useful experience from the Baltic Region to other OSCE subregions.

## PRESS PROFILE



### *Die Presse, 6 April*

“They were the last independent witnesses who could tell the world what was going on in the troubled southern Serbian province of Kosovo – the

observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). To avoid them becoming targets for revenge, they were evacuated from the crisis province shortly before the NATO attacks began.”

### *Le Monde, 7 April*

“It is very well to explore the possibilities of promoting a pan-European organization like the OSCE, but one should not forget that it includes nationalistic States whose choice of foreign policy has little to do with democracy.”

### *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 April*

“With a ‘Stability Pact for South-East Europe’ under the leadership of the OSCE, the EU partners are seeking to improve the chances for a long-term peaceful development of the whole region.”

### *Süddeutsche Zeitung, 13 April*

“According to the Bonn plan, reportedly, a peacekeeping force would be established under the ‘formal’ leadership of the Conference (sic!) for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), in which Russian troops also would take part, as is the case in Bosnia. The truth however is that the OSCE, which Moscow for many years without success has tried to present as an alternative to NATO, is allowed to observe, but in case of an emergency not allowed to shoot.”

### *Isvestija, 13 April*

“To include the OSCE in the peacekeeping operation would allow the Yugoslav authorities to save face. The population would be told that ‘the NATO aggression’ was unsuccessful and that at the end of the day the Serbian point of view prevailed.”

### *Isvestija, 20 April*

“The OSCE is an unwieldy organization, which lately seems to have forgotten that it consists of more than 50 States, and not only the 19 who are members of NATO.”

### *Financial Times, 26 April*

“The Washington summit stressed the need for all international organisations – chiefly NATO, the EU and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – to play their part in reconstructing democracy and prosperity in the Balkans. For its part, the OSCE should focus on democracy and human rights improvements. These issues will also be discussed in the Balkan Stability Pact conference called by Germany next month.”

### *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 April*

“In Vienna these last days, almost unnoticed by the public, thirty countries have agreed on the outlines for a new European security model. After negotiations lasting more than two years, they reached an agreement over the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) to post-Cold War security-political conditions. Thereby the continued existence of a main pillar of European arms control is guaranteed. Now, following the agreement over basic political principles, the drawing up of the legal aspects of the Treaty will begin in Vienna. It should be signed at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November. However, the ratification of the Treaty might prove to be a more complicated issue than its preparation and signing.”

## IN BRIEF



On 22 April, the **Assistant High Commissioner of the UNHCR, Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen**, addressed the Permanent Council. In his statement he outlined the refugee situation in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He said that the UNHCR's

top priority was to protect the fleeing refugees and to keep them as geographically close as possible to Kosovo in order to facilitate eventual returns. Mr. Jessen-Petersen also expressed his gratitude for the OSCE staff and equipment which had been put at the disposal of the UNHCR. He stated that the OSCE continued to provide critical support, especially at the borders, and said that the OSCE's manpower and experience was essential in preparing for refugee return. In this regard Mr. Jessen-Petersen expressed his concern about the fact that refugees from Kosovo were arriving with no identity documents, saying the international community was not only facing a problem of refugees, but also of statelessness.

### The OSCE Ministerial Troika

– Foreign Ministers Knut Vollebæk of Norway, Bronisław Geremek of Poland and Wolfgang Schüssel of Austria – met on 28 April in Vienna to discuss a broad range of OSCE-related issues, among them the Kosovo and the Transdniestria conflicts.

Regarding the Kosovo conflict, the Ministers agreed that the search for a political settlement must continue, while underlining that Yugoslav authorities must accept the conditions of the international community in full. The Ministers expressed the readiness of the OSCE to

serve as a co-ordinating framework and to take on a substantial responsibility for the implementation of a political settlement. They supported the development of a broad-based strategy to promote regional stability based, *inter alia*, on the German initiative for a Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the holding of a Conference on South-Eastern Europe in late May.

The Ministers stressed the need for achieving progress in the so called “frozen conflicts” in Moldova and Georgia, while pointing out that the OSCE stands ready to support the parties to these conflicts in reaching mutually acceptable solutions. In this context, a withdrawal of Russian military equipment from Transdniestria could give a new dynamism to the negotiations aimed at resolving that conflict. The Ministers also reconfirmed their support for the efforts of the Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs towards a political solution to the conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh. The Ministers welcomed the preparations to open OSCE offices in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the near future.



OSCE/Szymanski

*Troika Foreign Ministers (from right to left) Geremek, Vollebæk, and Schüssel in Vienna on 28 April*





## News from the Field

*The OSCE currently has Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo (FRY), Latvia, Skopje (FYROM), Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine as well as an Assistance Group to Chechnya, a Presence in Albania and an Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus. The following are highlights from the work of some of the field operations during the past month.*

### **Spotlight Turned on OSCE Border-Monitoring Activity in Albania**

Throughout April, OSCE border-monitoring activities in Albania were followed closely by the international media. Reports from the OSCE Presence in Albania regarding refugee movement, as well as reports of fighting between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) forces along the border, were widely quoted. OSCE Field Offices reported on limited incursions of FRY forces into Albanian territory, during which border posts were damaged or destroyed and mines laid along the border.

The Presence was also closely involved in the establishment of the Albanian Government's Emergency Management Group (EMG), and continues to provide support to it. The Presence's Field Offices have been providing the EMG with daily reports regarding the refugee situation and have also set up meetings between international organizations and local NGOs involved in aid activity.

In addition to these activities, the Presence is also maintaining ongoing projects and programmes aimed at assisting the Albanian authorities with democratization, the promotion of respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

### **Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje Focuses on Refugee Crisis**

In April the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje has been focusing on monitoring the impact of the Kosovo crisis and on providing assistance to national authorities. The Mission has engaged in close consultations with the authorities, including the Foreign Minister and leading members of parliament. The Mission is continuously monitoring all official border crossings with Yugoslavia, as well as key points of illegal entry. It has provided support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Red Cross, including arranging meetings between the Government and the UNHCR at the Blace crossing. The Mission has also been acting as a channel of information to international organizations.

### **OSCE Mission to Croatia Continues Monitoring and Assistance**

The OSCE Mission to the Republic of Croatia continues to monitor developments regarding democratic institutions, processes and mechanisms in Croatia. On 18 May the Mission will issue its quarterly progress report, outlining recent developments in these fields. On 22 April, the Mission hosted a meeting of international representatives in Zagreb with two ODIHR representatives from Warsaw. The meeting served to outline plans for observation activities relating

to the Parliamentary election coming up in January 2000. The Mission will contribute to the setting up of a long-term programme of monitoring of the Croatian media's coverage of electoral issues and the election campaign.

The Mission is also monitoring developments in the Danubian region of Croatia, particularly in regard to the current conflict in Kosovo. To date no incidents linked to the conflict have been reported and the overall situation remains calm. Serb leaders have publicly discouraged protest rallies by the Serb community in the region against the NATO intervention.

### **Update from Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is preparing for the second post-war municipal elections, scheduled to take place in November. Preparations for In-Country Voter Registration are reaching the final phase. In an effort to give greater control over the election to local officials, the registration is to be carried out by Local Election Committees. The Out-of-Country Voting Branch of the Mission has initiated its voter registration programme, which will give all eligible voters living outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the FRY the opportunity to register for elections via mail. Registration of political parties and independent candidates is scheduled to take place from 10 to 21 May.

The Mission began a gradual return to all but four of its offices in the Republika Srpska (RS), and continues to resume its normal operations in the RS, which were suspended in late March. The Mission has continued to monitor the impact of events in Kosovo on Bosnia and Herzegovina. To date around 31,000 refugees have come to Bosnia and Herzegovina from the FRY. Human rights officers from the Mission have assisted in interviewing refugees with regard to alleged human rights violations in Kosovo.

The Mission is also continuing its wide-scale efforts relating to media development, regional stabilization and democratization, and continuing to participate in drafting work on the Permanent Election Law (PEL) and the information campaign related to it.

#### **Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus Conducts Limited Assessment of Local Elections**

As part of its mandate to assist Belarusian authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with

other OSCE commitments, the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus (AMG) has conducted a limited assessment of the local elections which took place in Belarus on April 4. The AMG found that there was a general lack of enthusiasm for the process on the part of voters as well as little press coverage. Several parties decided to boycott the elections. The OSCE did not organize a complete Election Observation Programme for the elections as the AMG is of the opinion that the current election provisions do not provide for a free and fair election process.

## **REPORT** from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

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### **The UNDP and the World Bank**

Between 7 and 9 April the High Commissioner was in New York and Washington, where he met with representatives of the UNDP and the World Bank. He also had meetings with United States officials and delivered a speech to the Brookings Institution.

### **The Czech Republic**

The High Commissioner visited the Czech Republic on 13 and 14 April. He had meetings with President Vaclav Havel, Jan Kavan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Martin Palous, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Petr Uhl, the Commissioner of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights. Among the subjects discussed was the situation of the Roma in the Czech Republic.

### **Latvia**

On 12 April the Latvian Foreign Minister, Mr. Birkavs, visited the High Commissioner in the Hague. The draft language law was a main topic of discussion.

### **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

On 15 and 16 the High Commissioner visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He wanted to familiarize himself with the inter-ethnic situation in light of the massive influx of ethnic Albanians into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a result of the crisis in Kosovo. During his two-day visit he met with Foreign Minister Dimitrov and leaders of major political parties. The High Commissioner discussed, inter alia, the potentially destabilizing political and economic effects that new

waves of refugees would have on the country.

### **Ukraine**

Between 18 and 21 April the High Commissioner visited Ukraine. He spent the first part of his visit in Crimea where he met a number of officials of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC), representatives of the President of Ukraine in the ARC, members of the Russian community and representatives of the Crimean Tartars.

In order to foster greater inter-ethnic understanding, the High Commissioner will organize a seminar on linguistic and educational rights of national minorities in Ukraine.

In Simferopol, the High Commissioner received information on the latest developments concerning the Crimean Tar-

tars. Recent incidents have demonstrated the volatility of the situation. The High Commissioner discussed various aspects of the Tartar problem with Crimean Tartar leaders and members of the Presidential Administration.

The High Commissioner has long highlighted the economic plight of the Crimean Tartars and the need for economic assistance. This message was repeated at a meeting with donor countries in Kyiv.

In Kyiv the High Commissioner also met with number of senior government officials including the Head of the Presidential Administration, the Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of the National Security Council and the Chairman of the State Committee for Migration and Nationalities.

#### **The Slovak Republic**

On 30 April the High Commissioner visited the Slovak Republic in order to encourage the government coalition to

finalize a draft law on minority languages. During his brief visit, the High Commissioner met with Deputy Prime Ministers Csaky and Fogas. The meetings coincided with a visit of a delegation of experts from the High Commissioner's Office, the Council of Europe and the European Commission who were in Bratislava to provide legal advice on the draft legislation. The High Commissioner expressed his views on the possible elements and structure of the draft law.

#### **Report on Minority Linguistic Rights**

In April the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities issued a "Report on the Linguistic Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities in the OSCE Area." The report is the result of a two-year comparative study on the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities. It is based on information obtained by official replies to a brief questionnaire sent, with a letter, to the Foreign Ministers of all OSCE participating States in December 1996.

The questions asked of the participating States sought information on four fundamental aspects of linguistic rights: the status of particular languages in the State; the extent of the rights of and possibilities for persons belonging to national minorities to use their language with administrative and judicial authorities of the State; the role of minority languages in the educational curriculum; and access for persons belonging to national minorities to public media in their language. Particular emphasis was placed on practices relating to the use of language in education.

The report provides an analysis of responses to these questions and gives an overview of international standards regarding linguistic rights. The goal of the High Commissioner was that "the substance of official replies would reveal the extent of common practices and also the variety of existing approaches from which we could all learn".

Copies of the report are available free of charge from the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

## **REPORT of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

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#### **Total Media Control in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, addressed the OSCE Permanent Council on 22 April, once again raising his concerns regarding freedom of the media in the FRY. He singled out the broadcasting practices of the State-run Serbian Radio

and Television (RTS) as especially offensive and hateful. Duve also drew the attention of the Permanent Council to the use of terrorist tactics against individuals in order to be able to misuse them for war propaganda purposes in the media. He was disturbed by the use of the RTS in what might in the future be called a media-war-crime: utilizing a citizen and one of Kosovo's leading poli-

ticians, Ibrahim Rugova, as a media hostage. According to Duve, there were credible reports from foreign correspondent Renate Flottau that Rugova was forced to take part in the so-called Milošević show broadcast on RTS while his children and his wife were under constant threat from police forces that controlled his house in Priština.

Duve also continued to be concerned for the safety of journalists, both local and foreign, working in the FRY. In late March-early April the Belgrade authorities wiped out all independent media – the few ones that continued to operate despite the numerous restrictions of the Serbian Law on Public Information, stated Duve. The leading independent broadcaster B92 was closed down and a radio station under the same name has restarted broadcasting, however with new staff. Slavko Curuvija, a leading independent editor and publisher, was gunned down on 11 April in Belgrade, stressed Duve.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media noted that numerous foreign correspondents had been harassed, detained and expelled, and their equipment confiscated. He gave a few examples from April: Russian TV correspondent Gleb Ovsyannikov – expelled. German TV journalist Pit Schnitzler – missing after leaving Belgrade en route to Zagreb, and now in a Belgrade prison. Italian reporter Lucia Annunciata – detained, threatened and questioned by the authorities before being allowed to leave the country.

#### **Duve Concerned with the Bombing of RTS**

On 27 April, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media issued a press

release voicing his serious concern with NATO's missile attack against the RTS in Belgrade on 23 April 1999. Fully appreciating the fact that the RTS has been the backbone of Milošević's war propaganda machine, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was, nevertheless, worried that in any future conflict journalists would be dealt with as "combatants" rather than "non-combatants." The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media believed that setting such a precedent was extremely dangerous.

#### **Duve Visits Central Asia**

In April the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media visited Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and his Adviser Stanley Schrager visited Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. During all five visits, meetings were conducted with the "four constituencies": the Government, the Parliament, media and non-governmental organizations. Duve would report on his visit to the Central Asian States at the OSCE Permanent Council in May.

#### **Meetings in Geneva**

Beate Meader-Metcalf, Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, on 12-13 April, attended the UN Commission on Human Rights and met with Mr. Abid Hussain, Special

Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Mr. Hussain presented his report to the Commission. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media planned to establish closer links with the Office of Mr. Hussain.

#### **ODIHR Seminar in Warsaw**

Alexander Ivanko, Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, took part in the April ODIHR Human Dimension Seminar on the role of field missions. The Seminar was attended by over a hundred representatives from participating States, OSCE institutions and numerous NGOs.

#### **Discussing Media Law in Bulgaria**

At the invitation of the International Press Institute, Stanley Schrager, Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, participated in April in a two-day seminar in Sofia with members of the Bulgarian media and representatives of other international institutions, including Article 19, Open Society and UNESCO. The seminar focused on the new Bulgarian draft media law.



## UPDATE from the ODIHR

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at Aleje Ujazdowskie 19, PL-00 557 Warsaw, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 520 06 00, fax: (+48-22) 520 06 05, e-mail: [office@odih.osce.waw.pl](mailto:office@odih.osce.waw.pl)

### Human Dimension Seminar

A Human Dimension Seminar on "Human Rights: the Role of Field Missions" was held in Warsaw from 27 to 30 April. The Seminar was organized by the ODIHR and was attended by delegations from OSCE participating States, international organizations, members of OSCE missions and field offices, and non-governmental organizations.

The Seminar was opened by Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, the Head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, Ambassador William Walker, and the Deputy High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ian Martin. The Seminar was closed by Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Janne Haaland Matlary.

Discussion was divided into two subject areas: the role of human rights and field missions in conflict and crisis situations and the role of field missions in promoting and protecting human rights. The discussion was lively and constructive and the seminar was welcomed by all participants, in particular by OSCE mission members.

The importance of field missions in the protection and promotion of human rights was emphasized, and four essential guidelines emerged for field operations in the area of human rights. They were: that the responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights lies, first and foremost, with participating States; that human rights are an integral part of all field missions; that human rights are



*From left: Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, ODIHR Director Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, Head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission Ambassador William Walker and Deputy High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ian Martin address the Human Dimension Seminar*

an integral part of long-term security and stability building; and that the successful implementation of human dimension issues is linked to an overall integrated and consistent approach.

Specific recommendations were also made to field missions and offices, headquarters and institutions and to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and participating States. These recommendations largely focused on issues of co-operation and co-ordination among OSCE and other missions and institutions, sustainability and the creation of institutional memory in field missions, the monitoring and reporting of human rights violations, and the staffing and training of mission members.

In addition, a new Grassroots Democracy Programme was launched by the

ODIHR, to provide support for small-scale projects in countries where there is an OSCE field presence. Missions and field offices will be able to put forward small projects for support and funding by the ODIHR.

The rapporteurs' report of the Seminar is available from the ODIHR or on the ODIHR website at:

<http://www.osce.odih.org>

### Gender Issues Meeting

A Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Gender Issues will be held in Vienna on 14 June. While the agenda for the meeting is still being finalized, substantial work is underway to redesign the format of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings to ensure more focused and constructive dialogue.

Details of the agenda and registration procedure will be available on the ODIHR website.



### **Armenia**

A parliamentary delegation from Armenia visited the ODIHR on 9 April. The delegation, headed by Mr. Khosrov Haroutunyan, then Chairman of the National Assembly, included Mr. Khachatour Bezirjyan, Chairman of the Central Election Committee, and Mr. Ashot Hovakimian, Chargé d'Affaires of Armenia in Poland.

The delegation discussed election issues with the ODIHR in advance of the 30 May parliamentary elections, in particular the new election code and co-operation between the authorities of Armenia and the ODIHR. The delegation also discussed the abolition of capital punishment and the possibility of opening an OSCE office in Yerevan.

The ODIHR launched its election observation mission in Armenia on 19 April, under the leadership of Mr. Nikolai Vulchanov, Election Adviser. Twelve long-term observers and six core team members have been deployed so far and 150 short-term observers have been requested. A full report will be issued within a month of election day. The ODIHR looks forward to close co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which will also be observing these elections.

A separate ODIHR technical assistance team is also in Yerevan to assist the Central Election Committee (CEC) in devising a training programme for election officials at regional level. The team has prepared a training manual for election officials based on a number of rec-

ommendations presented to the CEC. The ODIHR team will begin the training programme when these recommendations are endorsed by the Armenian election authorities.

### **Croatia**

On 22 April, the ODIHR participated in a meeting in Zagreb to discuss preparations for the parliamentary elections expected at the end of 1999. The meeting, organized by the OSCE Mission to Croatia, brought together representatives from embassies of OSCE participating States and a European Commission delegation to explain the common approach of the Mission and the ODIHR to the elections in Croatia and to outline their division of labour. The ODIHR will organize a standard election observation mission and, together with the Mission, will select an independent international agency to set up extensive long-term monitoring of the State media, in addition to the standard media monitoring of the campaign. The heads of Croatian State television (HRT) have agreed to meet the international organizations fortnightly to discuss the results of this long-term monitoring. The Mission has also undertaken to maintain contacts with political parties during discussions of the new electoral law, which is currently going through Parliament.

### **Slovakia**

An OSCE/ODIHR needs assessment mission took place in Bratislava from 13 to 16 April to assess the preparations for the presidential election to be held on 15 May. An election observation mission, headed by Ms. Siri Skare, seconded by Norway, was established on 19 April. The observation mission will consist of five long-term observers and around 50 short-term observers. A preliminary

statement of the findings of the observation mission will be released on 16 May.

## **DEMOCRATIZATION**



### **Armenian Television Programmes**

The first in a series of six television programmes on human rights has been broadcast in Armenia. The programme, on the rights of disabled people and in the Armenian language, was produced for the ODIHR by a local television crew in co-operation with local non-governmental organizations. It was shown on 14 April on Armenian Channel One, following a week of advertisements on the same issue.

Production of the second programme, on the rights of detainees, is currently underway. Future programmes include the rights of women, refugees, soldiers and prisoners. The programmes are part of a human rights awareness project being implemented by the ODIHR under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Armenia and the ODIHR.

### **Prevention of Torture**

The ODIHR is continuing its activities for the prevention of torture. In this capacity the ODIHR co-sponsored a Conference held in Istanbul in March. The event was jointly organized by the Action for Torture Survivors (HRFT), Physicians for Human Rights U.S.A. and other NGOs in consultation with the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. The conference achieved major progress in finalizing the "Istanbul Protocol", on the effective documentation of torture. The Protocol is designed to enable health professionals to bring evidence of tor-

ture to light. It will serve advocates and adjudicators in their effort to effectively

prove incidences of torture. It complements the already existing “Minnesota

Protocol”, the UN autopsy protocol to document torture, and will fill an important gap in guiding the documentation of torture.



*Filming in Yerevan, Armenia, on the rights of disabled people*

### **New Faces**

The ODIHR is pleased to welcome Mr. Randolph Oberschmidt as Head of the Democratization Section, and Mr. Nicolae Gheorghe as Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues. Ms. Jill Thompson has also joined the office as Adviser on Trafficking Issues. In addition, the office has been joined by Ms. Tamar Chitanava from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, as an intern.

## **REPORT** from the Parliamentary Assembly

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### **Working Group on Belarus Visits Minsk**

Representatives of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) visited Minsk from 2 to 6 April 1999 at the invitation of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus (AMG). The visit was timed to coincide with the AMG's assessment of the local elections in Belarus. The Working Group delegation participated in the election evaluation exercise. The parliamentary group also met with officials and representatives from the presidential administration, Government, Parliament, political oppo-

sition and diplomatic corps, as well as with members of non-governmental organizations and the media.

The purpose of this visit was to assist the AMG in its electoral assessment, to follow up contacts made during the first visit of the Working Group to Belarus, to gauge the level of political tension in the Republic and to make preparations for future Working Group activities. Mr. Adrian Severin (Member of Parliament from Romania), Chairman of the Working Group, was accompanied on this visit by Mr. Eric Rudenshiold, Parliamentary Assembly Director of Program-

The Ad Hoc Working Group also met in Copenhagen for the Assembly's Expanded Bureau Meeting on 23 April, to discuss future plans and its schedule of activities. Representatives are next expected to travel to Belarus to assess the political situation in the Republic during the opposition presidential elections on 16 May.

### **President Helle Degn Visits Sweden**

Ms. Helle Degn, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, visited Sweden on 13 April 1999 at the invitation of Ms. Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag (Parliament). During her

visit, President Degn also met with the Swedish Foreign Minister, Ms. Anna Lindh and members of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA, including the Head of Delegation, Ms. Tone Tingsgård. In her meeting with Swedish Parliamentarians, the President discussed the Parliamentary Assembly's eighth annual session, to be held in St. Petersburg in July 1999. She also discussed the role of the Parliamentary Assembly in the OSCE. It was felt that there exists a democratic deficit in the OSCE and that this problem should be addressed by strengthening the PA's role in the Organization. This issue was also discussed with the Foreign Minister. Furthermore, the discussions dealt with the crisis in Kosovo, which will be debated during the annual session.

During her visit to Sweden, Ms. Degn gave a lecture at the Stockholm Institute for Foreign Policy, entitled 'Conflict Prevention, Democracy Building and Common Security. The role of the OSCE on the Eve of the New Millennium'. In her lecture President Degn described the creation and development over the past years of the different OSCE instruments that deal with early warning, conflict prevention, post conflict rehabilitation and democracy-building. In particular, Ms. Degn elaborated on developments since 1992 concerning the establishment of OSCE missions, centres and offices in the Balkans, the Baltic States, Central Asia and the Caucasus. "There is no doubt that the OSCE missions constitute the most original and one of the most important instruments in the toolbox of the OSCE", she said. She also added that "over the years the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has striven to support the activities of the missions. So far I have visited eight OSCE missions and I hope to visit two more before the next meet-

ing of the Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg. "In this way", she said, "I am gaining a firsthand impression of the efforts of the OSCE missions. At the same time these visits provide me with an opportunity for increasing the visibility of the OSCE by calling attention to the importance of the activities of the Organization."

President Degn also informed the audience of the Parliamentary Assembly's continuing demand for the OSCE to abandon its existing rigid version of the consensus decision-making system and to replace it by what the PA calls "approximate consensus." "If this rule were accepted, no single nation could block OSCE action, and any decision taken by the Organization would still carry the backing of the vast majority of its members," Ms. Degn explained.

Looking ahead to the new century, Ms. Degn pointed out that especially "the Balkans and some of the areas of the former Soviet Union, notably the Caucasus and Central Asia, are obviously areas where the largest problems persist and it is of common interest to the OSCE States that these problems are addressed". Furthermore, she mentioned the Organization's aim of expanding its operations and improving their effectiveness. In this respect, the work of the OSCE on the 'Charter for European Security' requires special attention. "There is a need to lay down guidelines for a co-operative relationship between the OSCE and the various other international organizations dealing with aspects of security in the OSCE area", Ms. Degn said. From the very beginning, the OSCE PA has been actively involved in the work on the Charter. "During my term as the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I have made the promotion of the work on the Security

Charter one of the priorities in my efforts. It is also primarily with a view to the final negotiations in Vienna on the Security Charter that we have decided that the central theme of the forthcoming annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly next July in St. Petersburg will be 'Common Security and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century'", Ms. Degn concluded.

### **Expanded Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen**

#### *Statement on Kosovo*

On 22 and 23 April 1999 the Expanded Bureau of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly – consisting of the President of the Assembly, the vice-presidents, the treasurer, the president emeritus, and the chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteurs of the three General Committees - held a meeting in Copenhagen. During this meeting, which was chaired by President Helle Degn, the Expanded Bureau considered the draft reports and resolutions that would be presented for discussion to the Assembly Members at the annual session in St. Petersburg on 6 to 10 July 1999. The Bureau heard a report on the Kosovo crisis from OSCE Secretary General Aragona. Following discussions of this issue, Ms. Degn, speaking on behalf of the leadership of the Assembly, delivered a statement expressing strong support for the recent statement made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, in relation to that crisis. Mr. Annan's statement of 9 April 1999 was, she said, carefully balanced and reflected the deep concern felt by the leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. She went on to say that within the OSCE area – and indeed throughout the world – there were many States and regions with multi-ethnic populations





*The Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Aragona, addressing the Expanded Bureau in Copenhagen*

that must not be allowed to fall into the terrible circumstances that were being witnessed in the Balkans. We must – the OSCE, the UN, the European Union and all responsible nations – do our utmost to end this conflict and to take measures to prevent other such conflicts from occurring in the future. President Degn said also that there would be a thorough discussion of the Kosovo crisis at the OSCE PA’s annual session in St. Petersburg.

*1999 OSCE PA Prize  
for Journalism and Democracy*

At the Expanded Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen, the leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly awarded the 1999 OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to the international reporter, Christiane Amanpour. The prize, in the amount of USD 20,000, is awarded every year by the Assembly to journalists who, through their work, have promoted OSCE principles pertaining to human rights and democracy. In 1996 the prize was awarded to the Polish journalist Adam Michnik, in 1997 to the organization “Reporters sans frontières”, and last year to British

writer and journalist Timothy Garton Ash. CNN chief international correspondent Christiane Amanpour began to earn her reputation as a world-class correspondent with her coverage of the dramatic changes that occurred in the OSCE region during 1989 and 1990. She closely followed and reported on the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent crisis in Georgia, and helped to place the Bosnian tragedy into context through her courageous and forthright reporting. Her bravery, professionalism and sensitivity stands as a model for free and independent journalism in the OSCE area. The prize will be presented to Christiane Amanpour during the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s annual session on 6 July 1999 in St. Petersburg.

**First Meeting of Ad Hoc Committee on Election Monitoring**

On 22 April 1999 the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Election Monitoring held its inaugural meeting on the premises of the Danish Parliament. This meeting, organized in conjunction with the meeting of the Assembly’s Expanded Bureau, was chaired by the OSCE PA President,

Ms. Degn. The Ad hoc Committee was set up by the Standing Committee of the OSCE PA in January 1999, on the initiative of Mr. Michel Voisin, Head of the French Delegation to the OSCE PA. The Committee was created to construct an effective mechanism to follow-up recommendations made after election observation missions and to design a common election monitoring strategy for the international community. Such a mechanism was originally called for in the 1998 Copenhagen Declaration of the OSCE PA. The OSCE PA Ad hoc Committee on Election Monitoring is composed of Ms. Helle Degn (Denmark), Mr. Petr Sulak (Czech Republic), Mr. Tiit Käbin (Estonia), Mr. Michel Voisin (France), Ms. Tana de Zulueta (Italy) and Ms. Tone Tingsgård (Sweden).

During this first meeting the Committee focused on the follow-up of recommendations put forward by election monitoring missions and on co-operation with other international organizations. A proposal designed to ensure proper follow-up was presented to the members of the Committee, and plans were agreed upon to consult other institutions working in the field of election monitoring in order

to devise a common strategy regarding election observation were agreed upon. It is the intention of the Ad Hoc Committee to consult and co-operate with other institutions, such as the ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the North Atlantic Assembly. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee is scheduled to be held in conjunction with the eighth annual session of the Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg from 6 to 10 July 1999. More detailed issues are expected to be addressed at that time.

### **OSCE Parliamentarians monitor Armenian Elections**

Ms. Tone Tingsgård (Member of Parliament from Sweden) will be the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office with the task of leading the OSCE short-term election observation mission to the parliamentary elections in Armenia on 30 May 1999, and of issuing the preliminary post-election statement. To date, the OSCE PA delegation is composed of seventeen parliamentarians representing Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia

and Sweden. The delegation will co-operate closely with a similar delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe PA.

### **Forthcoming Presidential Visits**

As part of her travel programme, President Degn is scheduled to pay an official visit to France on 3 to 5 May 1999. On 20 May Ms. Degn will address the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. Also scheduled for that day is a visit to the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve.

The logo for the OSCE Newsletter. The letters 'OSCE' are in a bold, white, serif font, each contained within a dark blue square. Below this, the word 'NEWSLETTER' is written in a smaller, bold, black, sans-serif font.

**OSCE**  
**NEWSLETTER**

The OSCE **NEWSLETTER** is published monthly by the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

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