

Parliamentary Elections in Montenegro are “a Step Forward”



The Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to the Election Observation Mission, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Javier Rupérez (right) and the OSCE/ODIHR On-Site Co-ordinator Kåre Vollan (left) issue the preliminary statement on the Parliamentary election in Montenegro at a press conference in Podgorica.

A preliminary statement issued by the OSCE's election observation mission described the 31 May parliamentary election in Montenegro as “generally well conducted” and “a step forward towards meeting OSCE commitments.”

The statement, which was based on the reports of 21 core staff and long-term observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and 117 short-term observers including 28 from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, said the election was “generally well conducted.”

The election observation mission, which began its activities on 10 April, assessed

the election laws, the election administration, the political campaign and the role of the media. It reported that the election campaign was characterised by “a fierce competition and a high degree of distrust between the main contesting parties.” This resulted in “a negative campaign and tense atmosphere.”

OSCE observers reported that the State media generally respected the legal provisions for election campaign programmes, but in State television programmes, such as the news, there was a tendency towards supporting the ruling party. The Serbian State media reportedly gave strong support to the opposition parties.

Significant improvements were noted over the previous elections held in the Republic of Montenegro. The report stated that most recommendations made by the OSCE Election Observation Mission in 1997 and the Technical Assistance Team in 1998 had been implemented. It also noted that the legal framework and administrative procedures were adopted by consensus between all parliamentary parties.

On election day, observers visited close to 700 polling stations representing 65 per cent of all polling stations. No major problems were reported. Turnout was high and the observers reported a “calm and correct implementation of the voting and counting procedures.”

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The preliminary statement made it clear that “no final assessment can be drawn until the vote count and the verification procedure have been completed, and the final results have been published.” The OSCE/ODIHR will observe the post-election day process, including the installation of the new Republican Assembly. A final report will be issued in the coming weeks.

The Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to the Election Observation Mission, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Javier Rupérez and the OSCE/ODIHR On-Site Co-ordinator Kåre Vollan emphasized in

the statement of 31 May that “the verification and adjudication process must now be completed in a timely and comprehensive manner, and all political forces should work constructively towards the full respect and orderly implementation of the results.”

In a press release issued on 1 June the Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek said that the “election process in Montenegro has shown that the people have been able to freely express their right to vote.” He called on all parties to respect the outcome of the elections and work at establishing a climate of dialogue and trust in

Montenegro. Mr. Geremek expressed his belief that “these elections represent an important step for democracy in the whole of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and that they will contribute to maintaining stability in the region.”

The press release concluded by stating that “the OSCE stands ready to further support Montenegro in its efforts to consolidate its democratic institutions.” The Chairman-in-Office urged the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia “to respond constructively to the offers made by the OSCE and the international community.”

OSCE Remains Committed to Dialogue on Kosovo

The OSCE continues to stress the need for a constructive dialogue between the Yugoslav authorities and the representatives of the Kosovar Albanians. The point was raised on several occasions in the month of May.

On 4 May the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, wrote to Slobodan Milošević, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), saying that “I hope you will also share the view that new and intensified efforts are indispensable to overcome obstacles to a dialogue and to averting negative trends.” He said that this would require a “constructive and co-operative approach of all parties concerned.” He expressed his strong belief that “the OSCE is ready and may be of concrete assistance in this respect.” He described as “essential” the early launching of the Gonzalez mission in order for there to be substantial progress in the relation-

ship between the FRY and the OSCE and the international community.

This point was rebuffed by President Milošević in a letter to Mr. Geremek on 7 May in which he reiterated the position that the FRY “has long since sought to normalize its full-fledged status in the OSCE.” Therefore a mission would be welcomed for improving relations between the OSCE and the FRY but “no foreign envoy can be accepted in dealing with our internal affairs.”

In a reply dated 8 May, the Chairman-in-Office wrote that “irrespective of our differences we should look for a solution to the problems that we are faced with.” He again called for the launch of the Gonzalez mission “to talk on all issues relating to the relations between the OSCE and FRY.”

Although the OSCE offer to facilitate dialogue was not taken up, U.S. diplomatic

efforts resulted in direct talks between the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević and the Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova on 15 May. This meeting set the course for future weekly talks in Pristina, albeit without international involvement.

Mr. Geremek said that he considered this meeting “an important first step and an opportunity for the two sides to agree on a format for dialogue.” He reiterated the OSCE position that “a peaceful solution to the ever worsening conflict can only be found at the negotiating table.” He said that an international representative would greatly facilitate such talks.

He repeated that the OSCE remains ready to assist in the process and maintains its expectation that the FRY will accept the mission of Mr. Felipe González as the OSCE and EU Representative.

This plea was echoed in the final communiqué of the G-8 Summit which took place in Birmingham on 15 May. It underlined the importance of co-operation with the González mission and said that “we stand ready to promote a clear and achievable path towards the FRY's full integration into the international community. But if Belgrade fails to build on recent progress and a genuine political process does not get under way, its isolation will deepen.”

The Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, held in Luxembourg on 28 May, issued a statement on Kosovo in which it called on President Milošević to agree to the re-admission of the OSCE long-term missions and to accept the mission of Mr. Gonzalez.

The OSCE continues to monitor the situation in Kosovo and to inform the international community of developments there. Information is gathered

through monitoring visits conducted by diplomatic personnel from OSCE participating States accredited in Belgrade as well as through the activity of the OSCE Presence in Albania (particularly through its temporary field offices in Bajram Curri and Kukës close to the Kosovo province border) and the Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje. Developments in Kosovo are also discussed in the weekly Permanent Council meetings and in a special Watch Group.

On 20 May Mr. Geremek, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1160, submitted a report to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the situation in Kosovo and measures taken by the OSCE. He reported that the situation remains tense and that security conditions have been steadily deteriorating. He cited almost daily violent clashes along the border with Albania and in the central part of Kosovo, including sporadic fighting in

several cities as well as suburbs of Pristina. The situation along the FRY's border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was described as “calm and relatively normal.”

By late May there were reports of an increase in the number of acts of violence on both sides. The strengthened presence of Serbian police, including special police units, as well as military forces, is said to be generating insecurity among the local population. On 28 and 29 May OSCE field observers reported a significant offensive by Federal troops on as many as 19 villages. A significant number of refugees are reported to have crossed the border into Albania. The OSCE, in close co-operation with the ECMM, the UNHCR and UNPREDEP is closely monitoring the worsening crisis and its effect on population movements in the area. It is also pursuing its diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the crisis.



In a statement issued on 14 May, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, expressed his "great concern" at the **assassination attempt against Akin Birdal, the Chairman of the Turkish Human Rights Association.** He said that he hoped

for Mr. Birdal's speedy and full recovery. He also expressed his “satisfaction that the Turkish Government at its highest levels has condemned the attack and promised to do its utmost to apprehend and bring the perpetrators to justice.”

On 22 May the Permanent Council was addressed by **H.E. Andrea Willi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.** Foreign Minister Willi, a former member of the delegation of Liechtenstein to the CSCE, presented her country's views on the role of the OSCE and the development of a Document-Charter on

European Security. She put particular emphasis on the need for transparency and solidarity.

On 22 May the Permanent Council took a decision welcoming **Jordan** as a **Mediterranean partner for co-operation.** Jordan is the sixth OSCE Mediterranean partner for co-operation. The others are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia.

It has been agreed that the next OSCE **Ministerial Council** will be held in Oslo on 2-3 December 1998.

OSCE Expresses Concern over Deterioration of Security Situation in Georgia

The OSCE has been closely watching developments in Georgia. Fighting was reported in the Gali district, in the west of the country, on 20 May in what was the most serious clash between Georgian irregulars and Abkhaz militia since the ceasefire agreement of 1994. The fighting followed a series of violent incidents and reprisals in the region over the past month, which have involved killings, hostage takings and the burning of houses.

On 22 May the Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, Ambassador Michael Libal, took part in an extraordinary meeting of the Co-ordinating Council. The Council, which meets periodically and is presided over by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Georgia, includes Abkhaz representatives, representatives of the Georgian Government (including the Foreign Minister), the Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, representatives of the "Friends of the UN Secretary

General" on Georgia, and the Russian Special Envoy for Abkhazia. On behalf of the OSCE, Ambassador Libal expressed serious concern about the deterioration of the situation in the Gali district and appealed to both sides not to bring about a further escalation in the already very tense situation.

This sentiment was echoed by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek, in a statement issued on 28 May in which he expressed his deep concern about the deterioration of the security situation in the Gali region and said that "this newly inflamed conflict seriously threatens UN-led efforts to achieve an overall resolution of the conflict and poses a danger to the regional security of other areas of the Caucasus."

Mr. Geremek appealed to both sides to stop the hostilities immediately and to uphold the Ceasefire Agreement signed on 25 May in Gagra.

He offered the OSCE's full support to the efforts of the United Nations. He said that the Organization "encourages the continuation of the peace process under the auspices of the 'Friends of the UN Secretary General' with the Russian Federation as mediator and with the participation of the OSCE."

The OSCE works closely with the United Nations in Georgia. It has a regular liaison with UN operations, particularly in Abkhazia. The OSCE also contributes personnel to the UN Human Rights Office in Sukhumi.

These contacts go beyond co-operation in the field. For example, on 7 May Ambassador Liviu Bota, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Georgia, addressed the Permanent Council on the conflict in Abkhazia. The OSCE is also involved in the UN-led Geneva process, which is seeking an end to the conflict in Abkhazia.



Recent Publications about the OSCE

OSZE: Aufgaben, Arbeitsweisen, Perspektiven (available free of charge from Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Welckerstr. 11, 53113 Bonn, Germany).

OSCE Decisions 1997, Reference Manual (a compilation of all OSCE decisions from 1997) is now available. To receive a copy (free of charge), please contact the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat at Rytířská 31, 110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic, tel. (+42-0-2) 216 10 217, fax (+42-0 2) 2422 3883, e-mail mail@osceprag.cz.

Also available is the document of the **Sixth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council** which took place in Copenhagen on 18-19 December 1997. The document - available in English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish - includes the Chairman's summary, decisions of the Council and reports to the Council. For free copies please contact the Prague Office.

Seminar Discusses Ombudsman and Human Rights Protection Institutions

Between 25 and 28 May the ODIHR co-sponsored a seminar on "Ombudsman and Human Rights Protection Institutions." The seminar, which is one of the events marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and which also coincided with the 10th anniversary of the Polish Ombudsman's office, brought together close to 250 participants from 43 OSCE participating States, 11 international institutions and 29 non-governmental organizations. Some 23 Ombudspersons and human rights commissioners took part.

The goal of the meeting was to look at ombudsman and human rights protection institutions and to discuss ways of developing such institutions to better promote and protect human rights.

In an important innovation to improve multilateral co-ordination, this year's Human Dimension Seminar was co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS. The Polish Ombudsman's Office and the Council of Europe co-organized the seminar and provided moderators for the working groups. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also provided two experts as moderators.

The seminar was opened by OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek. Mr. Geremek expressed his conviction that genuinely independent ombudsman and human rights protection institutions are crucial for democratic development and

welcomed the presence of ombudsmen in almost all European countries. Non-judicial human rights protection, he said, is as important as judicial protection. He emphasized that these institutions must be neutral, while investigating human rights violations and making human rights recommendations, and should ensure conformity of laws and practices with international standards, while increasing the public's awareness of human rights.

In the keynote address, Dr. Adam Zielinski, Ombudsman of Poland, reminded participants that it was not enough to enumerate human rights; they must be obeyed. He said that the work of human rights protection institutions is to make that happen.

Ombudsman institutions have more than doubled in number in the last 10 years, especially in countries which are in transition from totalitarian systems to democracy. Dr. Zielinski said that these institutions help to cope with the lack of citizens' rights protection in those countries and particularly with the weakness of the judiciary against the executive. He stressed that all human rights protection institutions must be independent of government and politics and have the powers needed to protect individuals from excess or abuse of power.

In the discussion groups, participants proposed and drafted recommendations to countries that are considering creating ombudsmen and human rights institutions, as well as to existing institutions and the international organisations that

assist them. They stressed that ombudsman and human rights institutions should be independent and have sufficient resources to carry out their work. They recommended that co-ordinated training programmes should be developed to serve the needs of both new and more established institutions. They also said that national plans for human rights education should be prepared. They urged close co-operation between ombudsman and national human rights institutions as well as non-governmental organizations and the mass media. They suggested that the ODIHR comprehensive status report on ombudsman and human rights institutions in participating States should be revised, updated and expanded to cover all OSCE countries.

The importance of developing a legal and human rights culture was stressed, as was the need for greater communication among ombudsmen and human rights institutions. One recommendation in this regard was for the creation of a regional Internet World Wide Web page for ombudsmen and human rights institutions that would include a complete collection of materials on the subject. Another recommendation was to use list servers to increase communication among ombudsmen and human rights protection agencies around the world. Finally it was recommended that there be increased co-ordination of technical assistance among donor institutions that support ombudsmen and human rights protection institutions.

Who is Freimut Duve?

The OSCE Newsletter talks to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

In Mr. Freimut Duve's office, which overlooks the Ringstrasse in Vienna, there is a yellow whistle hanging down from a lamp. "That whistle is special to me", says Mr. Duve, "it was given to me by the head of the independent radio station B-92 when I visited Belgrade during the street demonstrations in December 1996."

The whistle is deeply symbolic because, like the protesters in Belgrade, Mr. Duve is a whistle-blower for democracy. Throughout his long and distinguished career as an editor, publisher, political scientist, and politician he has championed the cause of freedom of speech and freedom of the media. In the 1970s and 1980s he published the political works of Václav Havel and Mario Soares' manifesto against the dictatorship in Portugal. As a member of the German Parliament, he served on a number of committees (particularly those dealing with human rights). Through his participation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly he was instrumental in establishing the annual OSCE prize for journalism.

It was therefore fitting that in December 1997 he was appointed by consensus as the OSCE's first Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Mr. Duve sees the post as a vital means of deepening the roots of civil society in the OSCE area. In his first address to the Permanent Council on 15 January 1998, he described the decision by the participating States to create the position of Representative on Freedom of the Media as "an important step

towards the implementation of our common values and democratic convictions." He praised the OSCE for being "the first international organization that has decided to have a new political institution to help to bring to reality what our basic documents say in writing: to guarantee the freedom of the media."



Mr. Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media

The objective of establishing the Representative on Freedom of the Media, as stated in the mandate agreed to by the Permanent Council on 5 November 1997, is "to strengthen the implementation of relevant OSCE principles and commitments as well as to improve the effectiveness of concerted action by the participating States based on their common values."

The Representative's role is "to assist the participating States, in a spirit of co-operation, in their continuing com-

mitment to the furthering of free, independent and pluralistic media."

Mr. Duve stresses that the Governments of the participating States are only one of his constituencies. "I am not a functionary," says Mr. Duve. "Of course I listen to the perspectives of the participating States, but in order to do my job effectively and even-handedly I must also take into account the views of parliaments, non-governmental organizations and the media themselves." Like the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), he stresses the need for independence and impartiality. His mandate states that he may collect and receive information on the situation of the media from all bone fide sources, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the HCNM.

According to his mandate, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media "will observe relevant media developments in all participating States and will, on this basis, and in close co ordination with the Chairman-in-Office, advocate and promote full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and free media."

In a world increasingly dominated by the media, Mr. Duve sees the fourth estate as both a mechanism for confidence-building and as a catalyst for conflict. This phenomenon is not specific to any one region of the OSCE area.

That being said, he sees a dichotomy in the role of the media which roughly

corresponds to the old East-West divide. In former Communist countries, he sees his role as assisting in the development of a “culture of change” and openness where press freedoms can play an important role in the process of transition. In those countries in which press freedoms are more established, Mr. Duve sees the challenge as preventing abuse of the independence of the media. In both cases, he underlines the need for responsible media.

Mr. Duve foresees three areas where he will be most involved. The first is in addressing specific complaints (in a non-judicial way) which are brought to his attention. The second is in looking at structural elements in a particular participating State which may limit implementation of OSCE commitments in the field of the media. Thirdly he intends to look more generally at the role and use of the media in the electronic age.

He will not yet identify the countries and the abuses of press freedom that he will be investigating. This stems in part from his intention to keep a low profile. Noting the successful and respected style of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Duve understands the need for confidentiality.

Nevertheless, his mandate gives him a clear early-warning function, particularly as regards problems caused by obstruction of media activities and unfavourable working conditions for journalists. In reference to his whistle, he says that he will (metaphorically) “sometimes blow it softly and sometimes more loudly.”

How he follows up on allegations of non-compliance will depend on the specific circumstances with which he is confronted. The basic procedure will be to seek direct contacts with the participating State and the other parties

concerned, assess the facts, assist the participating State and contribute to the resolution of the issue.

In the course of his work, Mr. Duve will maintain regular contacts with relevant international organizations, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies and the Council of Europe. He hopes that this co-operation will not only enhance co-ordination and avoid duplication of activities, but also allow his office “to act as a 'clearing body' for the work that is done on media matters within the OSCE family”.

The concept of an OSCE “family of democracies” is close to Mr. Duve's heart. He has seen that family draw closer together in the past decade and wants to do his part to ensure that it continues in that direction.

In Permanent Council decision No. 193 (5 November 1997) which established the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the participating States recalled that “freedom of expression is a fundamental and internationally recognized human right and a basic component of a democratic society and that free, independent and pluralistic media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government.”

They also reaffirmed the principles and commitments they have adhered to in the field of free media.

One of the most significant documents setting out these principles is the

Moscow Document of 1991 which, in section 26, states that:

The participating States reaffirm the right to freedom of expression, including the right to communication and the right of the media to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions. Any restriction in the exercise of this right will be prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards. They further recognize that independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

They consider that the print and broadcast media in their territory should enjoy unrestricted access to foreign news and information services. The public will enjoy similar freedom to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority regardless of frontiers, including through foreign publications and foreign broadcasts. Any restriction in the exercise of their right will be prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards.

The participating States will not discriminate against independent media with respect to affording access to information, material and facilities.



News from the Field

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

Update from Albania

The OSCE Presence in Albania is stepping up its border monitoring activity. Staffing has been increased in the temporary border monitoring offices at Bajram Curri and Kukës and further augmentation is expected in early June. Contacts with border post authorities and representatives of the international community who are in the area have been expanded. The number of incidents in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia close to the border between Albania and Kosovo province is reported to have increased significantly in the latter days of May (see story page 2).

The Presence also continues its systematic monitoring of Parliamentary procedure, as called for in the 23 January statement by the Tri-Parliamentary mission to Albania. It is also observing other political developments. For example, it was present in the southern city of Vlorë for a controversial rally of the Democratic Party on 9 May.

The Presence continues its involvement in the process of working with the Constitution Commission on drafting a new constitution. From 13 to 15 May it held a

“Three Powers Symposium: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Issues” which brought together international and national experts to discuss constitutional issues. It is also continuing its work on rule of law issues, and brokered a compromise over a procedural issue that threatened the holding of local govern-

ment elections, which are scheduled to take place in 15 municipalities on 21 June.

On 12 May, the Presence, together with the Parliamentary Media Commission and Albanian media institute, organized a seminar on amendments to the law on private electronic media. From 15 to 17 May the Presence, in co-operation with the Foundation for Civil Society, organized the first regional training seminar for NGOs in Gjirokaster.

On a lighter note, a successful “Tidy Tirana Day” took place on 29 May. The event, involving some 70 schools, was led by an Albanian NGO called Youth and Environment after a suggestion made by the Presence. The NGO worked with the UNDP, the Soros Foundation and the Presence to successfully organize a city-wide cleaning. Some 30,000 students removed 8,000 bags of rubbish. In return for their efforts they received a financial contribution for the upkeep of their schools. The event enjoyed extensive media coverage and support from international, national and corporate sponsors.



Ambassador Daan Everts (left), Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, looks at some of the bags of garbage collected by local school children in “Tidy Tirana Day.”

Photo: Reuters

Election Preparations Intensify in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Preparations for the elections scheduled for 12-13 September intensified in May. Some 68 political parties and nine independent candidates have applied to register. In early May the Mission organized workshops on forming party platforms for over 30 political parties in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and Bihać. The Provisional Election Commission (PEC) rules and regulations for the 1998 elections stipulate that each political party must provide a political platform when registering for the elections.

Terms of office for the electoral bodies in the forthcoming elections have been approved by the PEC. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be for four years and the term for all other electoral bodies will be two years. The term for the municipal governing authorities elected in the 1998 election will expire on the same date as those elected in 1997. The formula for the allocation of seats has been approved. The election will be conducted on the principle of proportional representation with seats allocated using the pure Sainte-Lague method. This formula assists small parties, as it removes the requirement for having an electoral threshold.

Rules covering fair broadcast and print media coverage and equitable access to all political parties and candidates will be in effect 45 days prior to the election. This will include free broadcast time for direct address by political parties and candidates as well as equitable publishing policies for political advertisements.

In the last week of May, the OSCE trained and deployed 460 registration

supervisors in regional centres and field offices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to oversee the voter registration process which will take place between 1 and 27 June. To facilitate the registration process 2.1 million voter cards have been distributed.

In other news, the Mission is continuing to monitor inter-ethnic relations, particularly in areas like Drvar, where violent incidents have been reported. According to the Mission, the rate of return of refugees and displaced persons appears to be increasing.

Some 200 journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries attended the OSCE Inter Entity Journalists Conference held in Sarajevo on 29 and 30 May. The role of the media in the election campaign was a particular focus of discussion.

To keep up to date with all the latest news from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina please access the Mission's website at www.oscebih.org.

Monitoring Renewed in the Region of Nagorno-Karabakh

The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, informed the Permanent Council on 28 May that OSCE monitoring of the Line of Contact between Armenian and Azeri forces in the disputed area of Nagorno-Karabakh resumed on 11 May. The monitoring activities had been suspended in February 1998 because of threats to the security of OSCE personnel. Additional measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the monitoring teams and assurances to this effect have been given by all parties.

Mission to Croatia Comments on Reconciliation

In a press conference on 7 May in Vienna, Head of Mission Ambassador Tim Guldemann stressed that if steps were not taken to ensure a proper environment for the return of refugees, 1998 risked becoming a "year of pronouncements" rather than the anticipated "year of returns." Responding to international concern, the Government of Croatia announced on 14 May instructions for the implementation of new procedures for the return of refugees.

On 18 May the OSCE Mission to Croatia issued a report on Croatia's progress in meeting international commitments. The detailed report dealt with the main areas of the monitoring activity of the Mission: displaced persons and refugees, housing, human rights and the rights of minorities, administration of justice and local democracy, freedom of media, elections, amnesty and reconciliation, de-mining and integration of the Danube region.

It concluded that based on its analysis of developments between mid January and mid May 1998 "many positive steps have been promised, some of these steps have been announced, but few have been implemented. Regrettably, in some areas no steps have been made at all. As a consequence, the course of post-war normalization has been delayed: democratic reforms in legislation, the judiciary and the media are still at a very early stage. This delay has had a clear and negative impact on reconciliation."

In other news, on 21 and 22 May the Mission hosted a seminar on media. The seminar brought together some 20 representatives of Government, as well as journalists and other experts, for

discussions on media and European integration, the situation of electronic and print media, and on media and reconciliation. The seminar was also attended by Mr. Freimut Duve, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The Mission is currently considering the modalities for a law enforcement monitoring role in the Danube area. Currently the UNCIVPOL's 180 civilian police officers monitor the performance of the Croatian police, particularly in connection with the return of displaced persons. The OSCE has indicated that it is committed to assuming this responsibility by the completion of UNCIVPOL's mandate on 15 October 1998.

Border Monitoring and Blossom Run in the FYROM

The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje continues to monitor the northern Macedonian border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The situation is reported to be stable and calm. It is also following political developments in the country, particularly those relating to the trials of the mayors of Tetovo and Gostivar, and electoral issues

In other news, the Mission organized its Fifth Annual Blossom Run on 10 May. The marathon length relay race (42km) starts in the western Macedonian town of Tetovo and finishes in the capital

Skopje. More than 400 competitors in 20 teams took part in this year's race.

First staged in 1994, the Blossom Run has become a tradition, symbolizing a link between Tetovo, whose population is mostly ethnic Albanian, and Skopje, the heart of the majority ethnic community.

The race brought together the different communities that make up the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Serbs, Roma and Vlachs) as well as representatives of the international community who work in the Republic. The principal teams were from the cities of Tetovo and Skopje, the Athletic Association,



Members of the relay team of the parliament of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia relax after completing the annual Blossom Run.

Parliament, the PTT, Skopje University, the OSCE, United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), and the Macedonian Army and Police.

Funds raised by the event will be donated to institutes for the blind in Skopje and Tetovo.

Mission to Latvia Follows Citizenship Issue

The OSCE Mission to Latvia continues to follow developments concerning amendments to the citizenship law. The Mission is keeping in close contact with the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the parliamentary bodies involved to ensure that the legislation is in line with OSCE commitments. The Mission also pays close attention to the naturalization process and the issuing of non-citizens passports.

On 13 May the Mission, together with the Civic Education Centre for the Pedagogical University of Liepaja and the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, organized a seminar on the social and national integration process in Liepaja.

Last Inspection Carried Out on Skrunda Radar Station

Between 12 and 14 May the seventh periodic inspection of the radar station at Skrunda, Latvia, was carried out. The inspection was the last periodic inspection before the end of the station's functioning period, which is 31 August 1998.

The Skrunda radar station, which was of strategic importance to the Russian air defence system, has remained in Russian control since Latvia's re-independence in 1991. On 30 April 1994, Latvia and Russia signed an agreement

on "the Legal Status of the Skrunda Radar Station During its temporary Operation and Dismantling." Article 14 of that agreement provided for the establishment of a Joint Committee, consisting of an equal number of representatives of both Parties and a representative or representatives from an international organization of which both Parties are members, to monitor and co-ordinate the implementation. Article 15 of the same agreement calls for the holding of periodic or challenge inspections by the OSCE in order to monitor the implementation.

Since April 1995 Mr. Jorgen Andersen of Denmark has been the OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee. He has been involved in the inspection phase. The parties are now discussing the modalities of the dismantling phase, which should begin after August of this year.

Renewed Hostilities Threaten Peace Process in Tajikistan

A new wave of violence and political infighting is threatening the peace and national reconciliation process in Tajikistan. Fighting broke out near the capital Dushanbe in early May. Accusations have been levelled by both sides as to the causes of the latest violence. The Mission is monitoring human rights abuses in areas effected by the recent hostilities.

The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan has been working with the Contact Group to get the peace process back on track. At a meeting on 5 May, the Contact Group, on the suggestion of the OSCE, issued a press release expressing condolences to victims of such unnecessary violence, and calling for implementation of the General

Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997. It encouraged the Government and opposition to discuss accusations against one another within the framework of the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR).

The Mission reports that the CNR has agreed to a new schedule for the complex cluster of issues associated with the implementation of the Military Protocol of the General Agreement. Power sharing and legislative reform are proving more contentious. Discussions on amendments to the Constitution and the law on political parties have been protracted. The Mission and the Chairman in-Office have urged the Tajik Government to ensure that draft legislation is in accordance with OSCE standards.

REPORT from the High Commissioner on National Minorities

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

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Between 11 and 13 May, the High Commissioner paid another visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He was received by President of the Republic Kiro Gligorov. He had meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs Blagoj Handziski and Minister of Education Sofija Todorova. He also had talks with leaders of political parties representing the Albanian minority in the country, the PDP and DPA, and with leaders of the Macedonian opposition parties. In other meetings, the High Commissioner consulted with several Macedonian and Albanian educational experts. He also met with Mr. Henryk Sokalski, Head of the UNPREDEP Mission.

The visit focused on the most recent developments in the country, especially those directly related to the state of inter-ethnic relations, and on the impact of the situation in the region, particularly in Kosovo, on the security of the FYR of Macedonia. With regard to inter-ethnic relations, the High Commissioner expressed his belief that the only way to ensure internal stability and peaceful development of the FYR of Macedonia was to strengthen inter-ethnic dialogue, communication and tolerance, and to continue the process of seeking solutions to existing problems within the institutions of the political system of the Republic. He highlighted this viewpoint during his conversation with the

leader of the opposition Democratic Party of Albanians.

The High Commissioner discussed with the authorities the implementation of measures proposed in the report of the special parliamentary commission, which investigated the question of whether the police had overstepped their authority during the Gostivar events of July 1997. He was informed of the current progress in the judicial procedure concerning the appeal of the Mayor of Gostivar. He also familiarized himself with existing problems in the field of minority education, especially Albanian language higher education. He expressed his conviction that a solution to these problems could be found.

Ukraine

From 17 to 21 May the High Commissioner visited Ukraine where he had meetings in Kiev and Simferopol. The visit enabled him to update his assessment of the current state of inter-ethnic relations in the country, particularly in Crimea. Among issues discussed were a number of questions relating to the Crimean Tatars, including the problems confronting a high percentage of Tatars in the social and economic sphere and difficulties that several tens of thousand face in the process of acquiring Ukrainian citizenship. In Kiev the High Commissioner was received by President Leonid Kuchma. He also had meetings with Vice-Prime Minister Valeriy Smoliy,

Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk, Mr Yevhen Kushnarev the Head of the Presidential Administration, and the Chairman of the State Committee for Nationalities and Migration. In the Parliament the High Commissioner met with Human Rights Representative of the Verkhovna Rada, Ms. Nina Karpachova, and the Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on National Minorities, Mr. Sergei Kyashko. He also had meetings with the resident representatives of the UNHCR, and UNDP, among others.

In Simferopol the High Commissioner met with the Representative of the President of Ukraine in Crimea Mr. Vasily Kiselev, and Speaker of the Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) Mr Leonid Grach. He also met with several Members of Parliament of the ARC and representatives of different minorities, including the Chairman of the Republican Committee on Ethnic Issues and Issues of Deported Citizens.

UPDATE from the ODIHR

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is located at a new address: Ujazdowskie Avenue 19, PL-00-557 Warsaw, Poland, tel.: (+48-22) 520 06 00, fax: (+48-22) 520 06 05.

Election Observation Mission in Hungary

The OSCE/ODIHR observed the parliamentary elections in Hungary which took place on 10 and 24 May. An observation mission headed by Mr. Mark Power-Stevens was established on 10 April and co-ordinated the activities of 75 international observers in the first round and 36 in the second round. Mr. Dzsingisz Gabor was appointed by the Chairman-in-Office as a Special Co-ordinator to the Election Observation Mission.

The observers were sent by a wide range of OSCE participating States and included parliamentarians from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as well as members of the international community in Hungary.

The OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission issued Preliminary statements, based on its long term and short term findings, on 11 and 25 May (available on the ODIHR Website or from the ODIHR Election Section), both stating that the May 1998 Hungarian Parliamentary Elections were carried out in a highly professional and transparent manner and in line with OSCE commitments. A final report will be issued a few weeks after the publication of the final results.

ODIHR establishes an Election Observation Mission in the Czech Republic

On May 12, the ODIHR received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic an invitation to observe

the forthcoming parliamentary election, scheduled for 19 and 20 June. A Needs Assessment Mission arrived in Prague on May 13 and had the opportunity to meet with all the parties currently represented in the Parliament and with the secretary of the Central Election Board. An Election Observation Mission, headed by Mr. Mark Power-Stevens, has now been established in Prague. Long-term observers are expected to arrive in the Czech Republic at the end of May to be deployed throughout the country.

Follow-up Mission to Ukraine

The OSCE/ODIHR conducted a fact-finding mission to Ukraine between 18 and 20 May as follow-up to the Election Observation Mission. The background for the mission was the concerns raised from various sources regarding the implementation of the election result following the March parliamentary elections. The findings of the mission, which consisted of the ODIHR Rule of Law Adviser and one of the Long-term observers, will be included in the final report on the elections which is to be issued shortly.

Draft Amendments Reviewed in Slovakia

The ODIHR undertook a preliminary review of the draft amendments to Act N80/1990 governing the elections for the National Council of the Slovak Republic. It also sent a preliminary fact-finding mission, headed by ODIHR Director Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, to Bratislava on 5 and 6 May to launch a dialogue with the Slovak authorities

and to establish the basis for future co-operation in connection with the OSCE observation mission for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The ODIHR experts had a chance to express their concerns over some amendments to the law, received certain clarifications and suggested improvements.

A follow-up letter on amendments to Article 23 on the Media was sent jointly by Amb. Stoudmann and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve (which also reflected the view of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly). A needs assessment mission will be undertaken shortly by the OSCE/ODIHR which will make a comprehensive assessment of the revised election law adopted on 20 May as well as the overall electoral framework and the status of preparations for the parliamentary elections.

Draft Law Reviewed with High-Level Azeri Delegation

The ODIHR sent an expert mission to Vienna between 18 and 23 May to review with a high-level delegation from Azerbaijan the proposed draft law on the election of the President of Azerbaijan. The ODIHR was supplied with a preliminary English translation upon which it based its recommendations for clarification and noted potential areas of improvement regarding certain provisions of the Law. After open and frank discussions it was agreed that the ODIHR would receive a formal copy of the translated draft law in English before it is officially adopted in Parliament.

REPORT of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media is located at Kärntner Ring 5 - 7, A-1010 Vienna tel.: (+43-1) 512 21 45 0, fax: (+43-1) 512 21 45 9, E-Mail: pm-fom@osce.org

Visit to Bratislava

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media paid a first short visit to Bratislava on 20 May. Mr. Duve called on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where he met the Director for the Human Dimension, P. Burian, and the Director of the Press Department, Mrs. Pospisilová. Mr. Duve raised a number of issues relating to the then ongoing revision of the electoral law and to current working conditions for journalists. His counterparts confirmed that recommendations on media provisions in the draft electoral law, which he had jointly submitted with the Director of ODIHR earlier in May, were transmitted to the competent parliamentary bodies. Mr. Duve was invited to pay a more extended official visit to the Slovak Republic in the near future.

After his talks in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Duve gave a public lecture on "Democracy and Free Media" in the framework of a series of conferences on "Modern Foreign Policy" organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association in Bratislava. The lecture referred, inter alia, to historic achievements of the CSCE/OSCE, to the corrective function of free journalism and free media in a modern democratic society and to the professional responsibility of journalists.

Seminar on Media in Zagreb

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was a featured participant

at a two-day seminar on the media organized jointly with the OSCE Mission in Croatia on 21 and 22 May. He delivered introductory remarks describing the role and activities of his office. The seminar sessions featured discussions on the print and electronic media, and the role of the media in establishing trust and reconciliation.

One of the major themes which dominated the sessions was the existence of a monopoly distribution system which favours media sympathetic to the government party. In perhaps the most trenchant observation of the seminar, one journalist said, "Whoever controls the distribution system and owns the kiosks, owns the ideas."

Another major issue that prompted some discussion were measures employed by the Government against the media based on Article 200 and Article 199 of the Penal Code which deal with defamation and insult.

Mr. Duve will co-ordinate his efforts to supplement those of the Mission in Croatia in the media field. One major issue for both the Mission and the Representative will be the debate on changes in the law on broadcasting in order to confirm that the privatization provisions are non discriminatory.

The Representative on Freedom of the Media will shortly be making his views known to the Croatian Government. The information gathered during the mission-sponsored seminar will form a basis for specific recommendations.

Visit to Turkey

At the invitation of the Government of Turkey, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media visited Ankara and Istanbul between 24 and 27 May for discussions with government officials, Members of Parliament, journalists and NGOs.

In Ankara, his programme included sessions with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, calls on State Ministers, including the State Minister in charge of Human Rights, a meeting with the Director General of Press and Information for the Prime Minister, a visit to officials from the Radio-Television High Board, and a session with the Turkish Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media consistently encouraged an "open and public debate" on the major issues confronting Turkish society. He argued that restricting public debate on controversial issues by penal and other legal codes could possibly have the unintended consequence of imbuing an issue with more importance than it might ordinarily have. Turkish Government representatives noted that it was the intention of their Government to "broaden" freedom of expression by means of a draft bill currently under consideration in Parliament. The draft bill contains narrower definitions of what is not permitted under the penal code and the anti terror law. Prison sentences would also be shortened. If the draft bill should pass,

several prisoners, including some journalists, might be released.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media also noted with some concern the issue of the Radio and Television (RTÜK) bill now being considered in Parliament, which, if passed, would effectively also lift restrictions placed by the law of 1994 on cross-ownership by large media companies of public utilities, including energy sector businesses. The proposed bill would also remove regulations that are intended to prevent the monopolization of the media by restrictions on companies and shareholders.

Mr. Duve also saw Akin Birdal, Chairman of the Human Rights Association, recovering in the hospital in Ankara from a recent assault, and the family of the slain journalist Metin Göktepe, in Istanbul, the following day.

In Istanbul, the Representative on Freedom of the Media delivered a public lecture at the Goethe Institute on "Freedom and responsibility of the media." He presented the mandate of his new office, stressing the corrective function of free media in political and social decision-making. Mr. Duve, noting the vigour and freedom with which this particular discussion has taken place, called for a similar kind of open discussion on the major issues facing Turkey today.

The lecture was followed by a meeting with non-governmental organizations active in the field of media and journalism. Mr. Duve concluded his visit to Turkey with an interview to a major private TV station.

Duve Meets with NGOs

The Delegation of Norway, being responsible for contact with NGOs within the OSCE Troika, called an informal meeting of the Permanent Council with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve, and a number of non-governmental organizations on 20 May 1998. Representatives of the ODIHR and the Council of Europe also participated. The aim of the meeting was to enhance co-operation between the Representative on Freedom of the Media and NGOs.

In his introduction, Mr. Duve outlined the main aspects of his mandate and pointed to three priorities:

- (1) individual cases, such as journalists attacked, where assistance from the NGO community is vital;
- (2) structured methods for repressing the media, such as State control over publishing, printing and distribution; and
- (3) "industrialization of the freedom of expression," which he defined as the need to protect the professional integrity of journalists and the role of the media in society in light of the development of large world-spanning media consortia.

While expressing their support for the new OSCE institution, several NGO representatives emphasized that there exist a number of obstacles to the freedom of expression within the OSCE region.

The OSCE Representative was encouraged to identify these obstacles and then to develop a plan of action to improve the situation. Mr. Duve explained in response that he does not possess any tools for coercion and that the only strength of his office is the power of influence that the new OSCE institu-

tion represented. He argued that it might be difficult to measure "concrete" results. Nevertheless, the fact that a Representative on Freedom of the Media has been established contributes to putting freedom of expression on the agenda in OSCE participating States, and Mr. Duve is determined to advance this goal.

The need for information, as well as transparency and visibility about the activities of the OSCE Representative, was emphasized in several interventions from NGO representatives. A proposal to develop an information strategy that would enable the institution to continuously inform the public, the media, other relevant international organizations and NGOs about the activities of the Representative on Freedom of the Media was put forward. Mr. Duve noted the proposals and acknowledged that a number of them were very useful. At the same time, he reminded the audience that his office had only existed for three months and that the institution so far had very limited resources, such as only three employees.

Notwithstanding the limited resources, Mr. Duve indicated that he intends to establish and maintain close contact with NGOs, via e-mail or fax, and he encouraged the NGOs present to update him on a regular basis and to continue to present concrete proposals.

REPORT from the Parliamentary Assembly

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

Parliamentary Elections in Montenegro

A 29-member delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored parliamentary elections in Montenegro on 31 May (see top story, page 1). The delegation was headed by OSCE/PA President Javier Rupérez, who was appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office as his Representative to the Election Observation Mission. The Parliamentary Assembly delegation included Members of Parliament from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Turkey. The delegation also included a representative of the North Atlantic Assembly and two advisors from the United States Congressional Helsinki Commission. The delegation monitored the elections in conjunction with the OSCE/ODIHR, representatives of local embassies, OSCE participating States, and a number of NGOs.

Prior to the elections the parliamentarians were given an extensive briefing, which included meetings with the Chairman of the Republican Electoral Commission, representatives of major political parties, and the OSCE monitoring mission. President Rupérez also held separate meeting with the President of Montenegro, Mr. Milo Djukanović, and the Prime Minister of the FRY, Mr. Momir Bulatović.

On election day, the Assembly delegation was divided into 13 teams which visited polling stations in Podgorica and other municipalities in both the

northern and southern parts of Montenegro. Delegation members visited more than 150 polling stations, and witnessed the opening and closing procedures.

President of the OSCE/PA holds talks in Belgrade and Priština...

Mr. Javier Rupérez, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, visited Belgrade on 29 May and 2 June. He met with the Speaker of the Serbian Parliament, Mr. Dragan Tomić, President of the Chamber of Citizens of the Federal Assembly, Mr. Milomir Minić and the Foreign Minister of FRY, Mr. Zivadin Jovanović. Subjects of discussion included Yugoslavia's relations with the OSCE and the situation in Kosovo.

On 3 June President Rupérez visited Priština where he met with the Serbian Governor of Kosovo and leaders of the Albanian population, including members of the negotiation team. Talks concentrated on the alarming developments in Kosovo. The representatives of the Albanians emphasized the responsibilities of the international community, including the OSCE.

...and in Skopje

President Rupérez visited the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia between 3 and 5 June at the invitation of Mr. Tito Petkovski, President of the Assembly of the Republic. He met with Mr. Kiro Gligorov, President of

the Republic, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Prime Minister, and Mr. Blagoj Handziski, Foreign Minister. He also met a large number of parliamentarians, including Mr. Dzeladin Murati, Vice-President of the Assembly, and Mr. Panche Nasev, Head of Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The talks concentrated on the dangerous developments in the region, particularly in Kosovo, and the threats that they cause to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. President Rupérez also discussed with his hosts the Republic's bilateral relations with its neighbours. In the talks both sides emphasized the importance of the OSCE's role in the region, including the valuable contribution made by the OSCE Mission to Skopje.



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