



OSCE's parlamentariske Forsamling
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Internt

Activity Report

OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe

Mr. Roberto Battelli

BRUSSELS, 3 TO 7 JULY 2006



Activity Report by the Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli

During the February 2006 Winter Meeting in Vienna, the President of the OSCE PA appointed me his Special Representative on South East Europe. With this, the President has followed a practice that previous Presidents have initiated, in order to continue observing the developments in this region so crucial for European peace and security. One of the objectives of my post is to enable the Assembly to closely cooperate with the Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact for South East Europe, which has been formed by the OSCE PA, the Council of Europe PA, and the European Parliament.

My mandate includes:

- Promoting dialogue in all segments of society, in particular at the parliamentary level, in order to encourage reconciliation and rehabilitation in South East Europe, and in particular in the Western Balkans, and to make a contribution to the transformation and building up of democratic institutions
- Maintaining close contact with and to serve as a focal point for our participation in the Parliamentary Troika of the Stability Pact
- Reporting to the President on the situation in the region, in particular the development of the status talks on Kosovo and the future of the Serbia and Montenegro State Union
- Communicating with relevant actors within the OSCE who work on issues related to the region.

Since the Wolfgang Grossruck as Rapporteur of the first committee is focussing this year's general report work on the activities of the OSCE missions, with particular emphasis on the missions in the Western Balkans, my first report can be seen as complementing his.

The OSCE PA has continuously addressed issues related to the developments in South East Europe, in particular on the Western Balkans. One of the foundations were laid at the at the Annual Session in Berlin in 2002, in a comprehensive resolution on the region which expressed the PA's concerns and expectations in view of the future of the region. Among other things, it

- Recalled the horrific events which began a decade ago with the demise of the former Yugoslavia, in particular the ethnic cleansing campaigns in which millions were displaced, hundreds of thousands killed and tens of thousands raped or tortured;
- Welcomed the progress achieved in recent years that has improved the prospects for peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in Southeast Europe;
- Expressed support for critical reform efforts underway in the region to strengthen democratic institutions, encourage economic development, build civil institutions, and promote the rule of law;
- Recognized that while there has been progress in some areas, a number of outstanding challenges remain, including the need to combat corruption and organized crime, promote respect for ethnic minorities, and encourage judicial reform and
- Viewed the international community's presence in the region, including the OSCE, as vital until peace, stability, democracy and prosperity are strengthened.

The resolution resulted in a high number of detailed recommendations. At the Annual Sessions in Edinburgh (2004) and in Washington D.C. (2005), the PA has again addressed specific issues related to the region; in particular the disturbing events that had taken place in Kosovo, and the anniversary of the massacres in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two democracy teams, one on the whole region, and another one specifically on Kosovo, had focused on possible parliamentary assistance to the processes of democratic transition and reconciliation. The PA has also worked on

setting up a round table of parliamentarians from opposing sides and participated in the activities of the Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact, which it chaired in 2004.

In 2006, the EP chairing the Troika, has planned four events on

- Judicial reform
- Parliamentary control of the security sector
- European integration
- Parliamentary oversight of the budgetary expenditure.

Secretaries of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegations in the region (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Greece, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia), had been asked previously about their interest in the matter, requesting them to identify one of their parliamentarians interested to serve as a link to the activities in the region. The feedback was rather low, so I will repeat this, in order to get a regular interlocutor from the region.

Parliamentary Workshop on Education for Democratic Citizenship, Belgrade

Before my appointment, I already chaired the first working session of a "Parliamentary Workshop on Education for Democratic Citizenship", organized by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) in the framework of its Chairmanship over the Parliamentary Troika of the Stability Pact for South East Europe. The meeting took place on November 7 and 8 in the Plenary Hall of the Assembly of Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade.

The Workshop brought together around 60 politicians and experts from a number of Participating States, with special emphasis on representatives from the region. In my opening statement on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, I reported that the OSCE PA, although not directly in charge of education, has devoted a high number of points in its resolutions to education in the same context as the workshop. I stated the OSCE's firm belief is that States that have a vibrant democratic society and respect human rights are the basis for security and cooperation. A democratic society can only be vibrant, if every citizen knows what democracy is all about, and human rights can only be respected, if the mentality of all those who might be likely to violate them is appropriately conditioned. This is where education plays its vital role. And education is the task of everybody who has a possibility to influence the thinking of the citizens, not only teachers, schools and universities, but also the media and – of course – the politicians.

The concept of Education for Democratic Citizens as defined by the Council of Europe foresees a set of practices and activities for equipping young people and adults to play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities. The discussions in Belgrade identified important issues like teacher training and retraining, text books and history teaching and curricula, but also access of the civil society to politics and the educational institutions, as well as incentives for their active participation. A discussion with University students and a presentation to the press rounded the meeting up, as well as a study visit to Kovačica (Vojvodina).

Meeting of the Task Force Parliamentary Cooperation of the Stability Pact for SEE , Sarajevo

On April 25 I participated in a meeting in Sarajevo of the Task Force Parliamentary Cooperation of the Stability Pact for SEE. Before the opening of the meeting, I got a thorough briefing by Amb. Douglas Davidson, the Head of the OSCE Mission.

Most participants in the meeting agreed that the Role of Stability Pact lies in

1. strengthening of parliamentary capacities
2. creation of sustainable working structures amongst SEE parliaments

3. stronger involvement of SEE parliaments in regional activities via providing expertise and information to SEE parliaments, especially in potential use of EU instruments and tools available and Coordinating donor activities

The 2006 Core Objectives of Parliamentary Cooperation, according to the chair's summary, are:

1. to promote harmonization of legislation with EU standards
2. strengthening and institutionalizing links between committees of different parliaments dealing with similar issues
3. channeling efforts towards training and capacity building of MP and staff, especially in
 - parliamentary oversight on government
 - implementation of legislation
 - parliamentary budgeting process
4. supporting regional parliamentary cooperation structures originating from SEE to become more operational and institutionalized
5. developing a common strategy/presentation of SEE parliaments with a special focus on the EU integration process.

A very concrete result of the meeting was that everybody agreed to participate in setting up a matrix on donor activities in order to improve the information exchange. The Cetinje Parliamentary Forum presented its plan of activities for 2006, namely three meetings in 2006:

- July 2-4, Kotor/Montenegro: Committee level/ Natural disaster prevention
- September: Neum/Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidents of Parliaments/ Single Free Trade Agreement
- End of year: Committee level/ Agriculture

In the past six months, almost a dozen of target oriented meetings have taken place. In this context, Alma Bandic-Dzodo, MP from the Federation Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, underlined the importance of exchange of MP from the region as well as the importance of women's participation in parliaments and the dialogue with NGO's. The representative of the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) drew the attention to the DCAF-handbook on Parliamentary Oversight over the Security Sector, a new publication on the oversight over intelligence service, Parliamentary Support Programme: funding of experts (via OSCE missions – now hand over to parliaments), and other activities that the Center supports.

I pointed at the preparation of a resolution on parliamentary oversight over security/military sector (will be presented in Brussels 07/06). I also expressed my hope for more engagement of delegations from the region, and I briefed the meeting about our upcoming election observation activities in the region. We also expressed our hope for a better information exchange among the organizers of conferences. Apart from the OSCE missions, other institutions that explained their activities were the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation office in Sarajevo the Konrad Adenauer Foundation office in Sarajevo.

Under the heading "Assessment of the regional ownership process", Goran Svilanovic, Chair of Stability Pact Working Table I and member of the Senior Review Group on the SP, outlined the final report of the Senior Review Group on the SP (03/06). The taking over of the activities will entail the need for a new organization of recipient countries and the transfer of the (SP) secretariat to the region, more responsibility and financial commitment, and a liaison office in Brussels. More than 25 different initiatives of SP would have to be handed over. The exercise would require support by EU Commission and further donor support by non EU partners. A possible timeframe could consist of 18 months of transitional period, end of 2007 new structure in place. He also identified five main areas of future cooperation:

- economic development
- infrastructure
- justice and home affairs
- security cooperation
- building human capital.

In this context, Parliamentary cooperation should, according to him, be treated as an overarching theme, supporting activities in all of the above areas. He also stressed the important role of Croatian SEECF chairmanship and his high expectations on German EU presidency 2007.

A representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Croatia said that the preparations for SEEP chairmanship were in full swing. Petra Bläss, Senior Consultant to the SP, saw an urgent need to better organize and utilize for regional cooperation activities, and necessity to improve institutional structures and operational capacities (creation of a regional focal point/service secretariat for parliamentary cooperation – use of “transition” year 2007) as well as close cooperation among Secretary Generals and staffers.

Another issue that the meeting talked about was the ongoing debate in Bosnia and Herzegovina about constitutional reforms, explained by Amb. Lawrence Butler, Principal Deputy High Representative, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, in Preparation for the SP Working Table I meeting in Belgrade on May 29, Marijana Granditz, Director Stability Pact Working Table I, said that Parliamentary Cooperation will remain core objective till 2008 and was also mentioned in report of EU Commission on enlargement strategy. She outlined:

- The new Core Objective of SP is “building human capital” (focus on higher education, vocational training, research)
- a women parliamentarian as speaker for the WT session (via GTF)
- importance of more efficient organization of parliamentary work/of courses for parliamentary staff (institutional memory)
- initiative of Committee on Education of the Kosovo Assembly: qualification framework/access to national qualification degrees (exchange with Estonian Parliament)
- Conference of UNDP on Governance (beginning 2007)

The meeting was also informed about Priority issues for regional cooperation:

- free trade agreements
- visa regime
- fight against organized crime
- infrastructure development
- investment policy.

Montenegro

Pre-Assessment Visit to Montenegro, Serbia and Montenegro, April 26/27, 2006

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, has appointed PA Vice-President Nevzat Yalçintas (MP from Turkey) as his Special Coordinator for the election observation mission that has been deployed to the referendum in Montenegro, Serbia and Montenegro, on 21 May. Professor Yalçintas has led the short-term observers and delivered the preliminary post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE. Along with Jerry Grafstein (Senator Canada), who served as Deputy Head of the Referendum Observation Mission (ROM), he has led the OSCE PA delegation. On April 26 and 27, 2006, I visited the country in order to assess the situation and the status of the preparations for the PA's ROM. At the time of the visit, around 70 observers from the parliamentary delegations in the OSCE PA had signed up. The long-term observers of OSCE's ODIHR had been in the country for approximately three weeks and just issued their first interim report. I issued a report after this visit, which is to be seen as being complementary to those documents, as well as to the briefing book to be prepared by the OSCE PA Secretariat. Summing them up, the pre-assessment has led to the following conclusions:

While the voting procedure seemed to be quite simple, the organizational requirements were in place, the voter register is one of the best in the region, and the media landscape provided for full information of the voter, the tension between the pro-independence and the pro-union block as well as the fact that the election administration is based on a system of block parity – with a tie-breaking vote of the international figure chairing the (central) Republican Referendum Commission – led to appeals to the international community in general and to the referendum observers in particular to interfere with the process. At the time I therefore judged that it would therefore be vital for observers to refrain from creating the impression of any such interference and to strictly stick to their role as neutral observers.

Meetings were held with H.E. Mr Ranko Kripokapić, Speaker of Parliament, Ambassador Miroslav Lajcak, Dr. Frantisek Lipka, Chairman of the Republican Referendum Commission, EU Special Envoy, Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu, Head of Office in Podgorica, Deputy Head of Mission to Serbia and Montenegro. We also had intensive and fruitful talks with the ROM Core Team Jørgen Grunnet, Head, Richard Chambers, Deputy Head, Elisavet Karagiannidou, Legal Analyst, Simeon Apostolev, Election Analyst, Marek Mracka, Media Analyst. We also met with ROM Longterm Observer (LTO) Teams 1 (Podgorica) and 2 (Cetinje), as well as the ROM Core Team on Logistics, Pawel Jurczek, Logistics Officer, Hannah Roberts, LTO Coordinator and Piotr Szymczyk, Finance Officer.

The different political views in the country were presented by representatives of Pro-Independence Bloc, namely DPS – Miodrag Vuković, Civic Party – Ivan Vujović, SDP – Ivan Brajovic, Liberals – Nikola Samardzić and the Pro-Union bloc, SNP – Velizar Kaludjerović, NS – Predrag Popović, SNS – Ragos Zečević, DSS – Dragica Perović. Finally, we talked with Domestic Election Observers (NGOs) from CEMI – Zlatko Vujović, Milorad Marković and CDT – Marko Canović.

Referendum Observation Mission Montenegro

I also participated in the Referendum Observation Mission in the days before and during the referendum, and I fully concur with the preliminary statement issued by the International Referendum Observation Mission.

Parliamentary Troika of the Stability Pact Seminar, Brussels

On June 8, 2006, I represented the OSCE PA in a conference organized by the EP as Chairmanship of the Parliamentary Troika of the Stability Pact. The Brussels Conference consisted of two seminars, one on the Freedom of the Media, the other one on the parliamentary oversight over the budget.

In my welcoming address, I said that – with the Stability Pact having entered its final phase – national parliaments in the region will have to take more and more of the issues dealt with by the Stability Pact into their own hands, which made conferences like the present one very relevant. I also drew the attention of the audience – which comprised Parliamentarians from the region as well as experts on the topics – to the work of the Parliamentary Assembly in the two fields. In particular, I addressed the timely discussion that the Parliamentary Assembly had held during its Winter Session on freedom of the media and the responsibility that results from this freedom, as well as the Parliamentary Assembly's media prize.

The debate made it clear that many of the developments that have gradually taken place in Western countries, often without involving legislation, nowadays have to be implemented in a very short period of time by legislators of the new democracies by the enactment of laws. The purpose of the Troika is to assist in this process and – in particular – to enable the exchange of views of national parliamentarians on these issues.

Council of Europe seminar on the upcoming parliamentary elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Skopje

On June 14, in Skopje, I represented the Parliamentary Assembly in a Council of Europe seminar on the upcoming parliamentary elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In my welcome address I underlined that the Parliamentary Assembly - from the very start - has followed the development in the country very closely. I said however that, due to the Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session that takes place at the same time as the elections, OSCE PA observers cannot be present, but that the PA during its Brussels session will closely watch - and most probably comment on - what is going on during these elections. I went on to say that "as parliamentarians, elections are the fabric from which we are woven. We want a parliament that represents a country to be the result of free and fair expression of the will of the people. And we also expect the people - not only the government or the political parties - to show its maturity by refraining from resorting to violence or any other way of impeding an orderly process." In this context, I pointed to the crucial role of the political parties, the leadership of which participated in the seminar. I stated that the parties have to make up their minds what they want to be - promoters of a successful society or mere gatherings of people who follow their own agenda.

Before the start of the seminar, I received a thorough briefing by Amb. Carlos Pais, the Head of the OSCE Mission, on the mission's activities.

Kosovo

Upon invitation by the mission, I planned a visit to Kosovo from June 25 to 28, which included the participation in a regional parliamentary conference on Security Oversight in Mitrovica and a number of talks with political parties. Due to some very urgent last-minute commitments, I had to cancel my participation shortly before I was scheduled to leave for Prishtina. Instead, Ambassador Nothelle from the Vienna Office, who was scheduled to accompany me, represented the Parliamentary Assembly in the Conference, visited the mission and both field offices in Mitrovica, paid courtesy visits to the President of the Assembly, Kolë Berisha, as well as Dep. Prime Minister of the Provisional Authorities Lutfi Haziri, and with Petra Blaess. A central point of the meetings were the preparations for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Chairmanship over the Parliamentary Troika in 2007.

Sofia

On June 30/July 1, 2006, I participated in an international conference "The Future of the Balkans - From Stability to Euro-Integration" in Sofia, Bulgaria. The conference was hosted by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ivailo Kalfin and the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Bulgaria, Solomon Passy and organized jointly, together with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. The discussion addressed issues of the future status of Kosovo, the role of Serbia for the stability of the region, possibilities for regional cooperation, and the role of international organizations. I was part of the panel organized on the latter issue. In my statement, I underlined the positive role that interparliamentary assemblies role can play in the process as facilitators of dialogue and as a framework for regional parliamentary cooperation. I also drew the attention of the audience to the Parliamentary Assembly's activities in the region.

Activities of the missions in the region that I visited

I would like to outline some of the intentions that the missions I visited have for their future work. I have chosen to do this by quoting excerpts from the 2007 Program Outline of the OSCE that is currently discussed in Vienna:

Bosnia

Mandate

In November 1995 the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the 'Dayton Agreement') awarded the OSCE certain tasks in the areas of elections, human rights, and regional military stabilization. The next month, at the fifth Ministerial Council of the OSCE in Budapest, the Foreign Ministers of the participating States decided, among other things, to '[e]stablish a Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina . . .'. More precisely, the Council decided that the 'Head of Mission will be responsible for implementing the OSCE's tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the fields of elections, human rights monitoring, and facilitating the monitoring of arms control and confidence- and security-building arrangements.' In 1997 the Permanent Council added to the Mission's mandate by deciding that 'the Mission shall maintain the necessary level of presence and involvement in the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998.' 'Furthermore,' the Permanent Council decreed, 'the Mission will continue activities within the fields of human rights, democratization, media development and regional stabilization in close co-ordination with other organizations active in these fields.' These activities still compose the Mission's mandate today. The Bosnia and Herzegovina of November 1995 is not, to be sure, the Bosnia and Herzegovina of May 2006. Nonetheless, the Tasks of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina remain as they have been since its inception: to work in close co-ordination with others and within the terms of its mandate in a joint effort 'to ensure an efficient and coherent implementation of the . . . peace settlement.'

General Outlook for 2007

Certain developments in 2006 may alter the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007. First, general elections are scheduled to take place in October 2006. It is still too early to say whether the same political parties will remain in power and therefore whether continuity will prevail or not. All political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina are strongly in favour of Euro-Atlantic integration, but, as their inability in April 2006 to agree to certain amendments to the Constitution, despite the strong support for them from both the European Union and the United States, suggests, this consensus on the necessity of such integration does not necessarily mean an end to the political divisions, which are in the main ethnic, in the country. Thus, in spite of the common goal of Euro-Atlantic integration, the pace at which BiH will implement the peace settlement, reform its institutions, and simultaneously ready itself for greater European integration remains difficult to predict. In 2007 progress will depend, at least in part, on the degree to which the parties in power are based on ethnic as opposed to issue orientation and the degree to which the government is based on strong or weak coalitions. If all goes according to plan, however, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union should sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement at the end of 2006 or at the beginning of 2007. Technically, negotiations are progressing smoothly. Politically however, the continuing lack of full co-operation with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the inability to agree on a single, State-directed police force in line with European Commission principles remain potential obstacles to the successful conclusion of talks. Finally, the anticipated closure of the Office of the High Representative and its transformation to a European Union Special Representative with a smaller staff and less intrusive role in the first half of 2007 will have an impact on the environment in which the Mission is operating. The Peace Implementation Council still has to decide on the details of this transition, just as it does on the fate of the Bonn Powers, which allow the High Representative to remove officials from office and to impose legislation. The disappearance of the Office of the High Representative from the political scene is, however, likely to result in an alteration of the international community's role in Bosnia and Herzegovina and could result as well in an additional burden for the Mission in assuming tasks and responsibilities ceded, in accordance with a "streamlining" of the international community four years ago, by the Mission to the Office of the High Representative.

Kosovo

The general outlook for 2007 will see the transfer of competencies to the PISG as largely completed, except for certain reserved areas related in particular to security, protection of human rights, and the holding of elections. The restructuring of UNMIK is already well-underway, with the Pillars for Civil Administration and Police and Justice having been already phased out in early 2006. Consultations on the scope and make-up of a future international presence in Kosovo are ongoing. The OSCE will play an important role because the Mission is likely to have the only extensive presence in the Municipalities of any international civilian organization.

The most important area of renewed engagement for the Mission is likely to be municipal governance and protection of minority rights. Monitoring and capacity-building of these mechanisms will constitute a significant aspect of the Mission's future work. The Mission's priorities will be clearly defined to focus on access to government services, property rights, mechanisms for public consultation, the judiciary and police, remedies, and minority protection. In view of these developments, the Mission proposes to re-designate its Programme for Human Rights and Rule of Law as a Programme for Human Rights, Decentralisation, and Communities.

At the central level, the Mission will concentrate its efforts on monitoring and providing support and assistance to democratic institutions so as to develop the capacity to operate in accordance with standards of human rights and good governance. The Mission will have advisers in the Offices of the President, the Prime Minister and the President of the Assembly in order to emphasize the importance of human rights and good governance at a high political level. A major focus will be on the Assembly of Kosovo, where the Mission's procedural monitoring is widely recognized as having led to improvements in the functioning of the legislature. The Mission will continue its focus on developing mechanisms of parliamentary oversight, particularly with respect to areas of newly-transferred competencies such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Justice. The Mission will have advisers operating in the major Ministries that will work to develop and implement human-rights compliant procedures and standards, particularly with regard to the protection of minority communities. Additionally, the Mission will continue its work in democratising and modernising institutions of higher education operating in Kosovo.

It is also expected that both municipal and parliamentary elections will take place in 2007. As responsibility for elections will remain a reserved competence for the duration of UNMIK, the Mission will continue to have responsibilities in this area through the service of the Head of Mission as Chairperson of the Central Election Commission. At the same time, it is imperative to continue to move forward with developing local capacities for administrative and operational tasks related to the holding of elections. In this regard, the Mission proposes to merge its Programme for Elections with its Programme for Democratisation, which will be re-designated as a Programme for Good Governance and Democratic Institutions.

In the area of public safety training, the Kosovo Centre for Public Safety Education and Development (KCPSED) will be established during 2006. This local institution will have responsibilities for capacity building not only with respect to police but also for the public safety and security field in general. The Mission will hand over management and operational responsibilities for basic public safety training and continue its efforts in the areas of advanced and specialized training, particularly leadership and management development. The Mission proposes to transition its work to focus on capacity-building in the training divisions of newly developed public safety and security institutions. Furthermore, the Mission is preparing to respond to requests of the UNMIK SRSG regarding critical security education and development needs identified in ongoing internal security sector reviews. As a proactive effort to meet these requirements, the Mission proposes to transition its Programme for Police Education and Development into a Programme for Security and Public Safety.

As part of the planning process, the Mission has reviewed its work in order to identify areas for disengagement and withdraw. The closure of certain programs will recognise the Mission's successful implementation in a number of fields and, most importantly, will free up resources for

new areas of responsibility. By 2007, a number of institutions created by the Mission will have been fully established and either transferred to local ownership or in the final stages of transition. As a consequence, the Mission's support to those institutions will change so as to take account of new conditions and priorities. Support to the Ombudsperson will continue through the deployment of OMiK advisers in order to ensure that human rights and minority community protection mechanisms function effectively. The Mission will no longer be responsible for direct management of the Kosovo Judicial Institute (KJI), but rather will continue to work with the KJI through its seat on the Board in order to assist with the development of capacity building programmes as a response to the Mission's judicial monitoring. A similar process will occur at KCPSED, as direct responsibility for that institution is transferred to a governing Board.

In the media sector, the public broadcaster, Radio Television Kosovo (RTK), has been established under new legislation with a sustainable source of local funding from the Public Broadcast Fee. The broadcast media regulator, the Independent Media Commission (IMC), will be fully established in 2006, including two international members of the IMC Council supported by the Mission. During 2005, the Mission assisted with the establishment of the Press Council, a self-regulatory body for print media. The Office of the Prime Minister has recently created a Fund for Minority, Multi-ethnic and Disadvantaged Media, which will create the opportunity for sustainable financing for local broadcasters. Since the institutions and mechanisms have been successfully established, the Mission will largely withdraw from activities in this area. The Mission's activities will be limited to support for the international members of the IMC Council and its appeals board, who will report on the state of media regulation and public broadcasting. The Mission will also support minority language and multi-ethnic media as a tolerance-building activity, notably in the Municipalities.

In the area of public administration, the Mission has assisted in the development of a basic institutional framework for the recruitment and training of the civil service. It is expected that the European Union (EU) will assume a significant role in providing public administration capacity building assistance in order to improve the professionalism and neutrality of the civil service. Therefore, the Mission will withdraw from major activities in this area. It is also expected that the EU will assume a leading role in the development of the rule of law in Kosovo.

Close coordination among the Mission, the Chairmanship, the Secretariat and the participating States will be required in order to ensure a seamless transition in the work of the OSCE in Kosovo. This will involve consultations with relevant stakeholders at all levels that are reflected in appropriate agreements. A crucial area will be to ensure continuity of financial and administrative arrangements, including the use of premises and cost-sharing modalities, in order to provide a sound footing for the OSCE's future work in Kosovo without incurring substantial additional costs and investments.

Serbia, Montenegro

Just before the Annual Session, the Permanent Council has discussed the establishment of a Mission to Montenegro, which essentially means a transformation of the existing Podgorica Office, and the renaming of the Mission in Belgrade. The following reflects the plans of the Mission before the separation.

General Outlook for 2007

In line with the Mission's mandate and as a follow-up to the Mission priorities laid down by HoM in his address to the PC on 2 March 2006, the Mission will further promote reconciliation and regional co-operation, foster stability and security, and assist Serbia and Montenegro in meeting international, and in particular European, standards and commitments. While these priorities will remain critical in 2007, with no immediate diminution of the Mission's need for programmatic resources, the Mission will focus increasingly on programmes which build capacity of local institutions to ensure sustainability of reforms and full implementation of standards and legislation already adopted. The share of resources required for various legislative drafting, monitoring and

standard-setting activities will gradually decline while the share of resources needed to build institutional capacity for implementation will further grow in 2007. Taking into account the political and socio-economic climate in Serbia and Montenegro, the Mission will strive to promote reconciliation and regional co-operation by:

- Addressing war crimes issues comprehensively through projects to strengthen the capacity of domestic institutions in war crimes cases, monitor domestic war crimes trials to ensure conformity with international standards, and promote public awareness of war crimes issues, including the need for full co-operation with ICTY
- Facilitating inter-state judicial co-operation in war crimes cases and supporting a regional approach to resolve refugee return and integration issues
- Fostering regional co-operation on a range of other issues including: border policing; the fight against human trafficking, organized crime and terrorism; and environmental protection

foster stability and security through:

- Promoting democratization, tolerance and the rule of law in conformity with OSCE principles, standards and commitments
- Supporting local institutions and co-operation bodies in southern Serbia, with specific focus on fostering dialogue between Belgrade authorities and local actors to address practical issues in such areas as integration of minorities into judiciary and the public administration, minority language education, economic development, media and policing
- Supporting multi-ethnic activities, especially in the sectors of youth, education and media; promoting the rights of ethnic minorities; and building the capacity of minority representative institutions
- Encouraging development and widespread use of community policing skills
- Providing expertise in the field of sustainable economic development, especially in ethnically mixed areas,

strengthen institutions through:

- Assisting in the restructuring of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary in order to strengthen their independence and impartiality and their ability to fight organized crime
- Strengthening institutions fighting corruption as well as those exercising oversight, in particular the Parliaments, in order to make the security and defence forces more accountable
- Supporting the full implementation of legislation in line with OSCE standards
- Helping the reform of the media sector and the development of the necessary media legislation
- Providing technical support to the Parliaments in Serbia and Montenegro
- Assisting the institutions of local self-government.

Skopje

The mandate of the Spillover Mission was extended on June 22, 2006.

General Outlook for 2007

Following the Parliamentary Elections of 05 July 2006 and implementation of the electoral reforms, the next Government enters an advantageous post-election period; with no elections foreseen until 2009 the next Government will be able to focus on the consolidation and implementation of its vast reform agenda stemming from its foreign policy goals, as well as the Ohrid Framework Agreement. In support of the Government, the Mission will continue its ongoing efforts to promote confidence building measures with the long-term aim to contribute to further improvement of inter and intra-ethnic relations.

2007 will be an important year for the decentralization process, as the two-year probationary period for the devolution of administrative and financial competencies to Local Self-Government Units approaches its July deadline. In this context, the Mission will continue to assist Local Self-Government Units in implementation of international standards and best practices while promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. Rule of Law will remain a core focus of the Mission activities in

2007 with particular attention paid to further implementation of judicial reform, as outlined in the Government's comprehensive reform strategy. Priority will be given to strengthen existing mechanisms to deal effectively with serious and complex crimes and to support full implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. The Mission will continue to work with the Ombudsman providing substantial institutional support, training and professional development. Rule of Law activities will continue to complement the Mission's continued assistance in Police Reform. Specialized Police training will be provided to increase capacity in combating organized crime and improve the Border Police Service. The Mission will build upon the current train-the-trainer programme to generate a sustainable police training capacity. The current internal security situation is expected to continue to improve, while in country security monitoring and capacity building will continue with respect to regional security developments.

After years of substantial downsizing, the Mission, in line with the regional trend, will maintain its current structures and programmes. The Mission projects a reduction in 2007 equivalent to 2 per cent, which represents ongoing consolidation of resources while preserving the Mission's present outreach capacity and its ability to accomplish the Mandate effectively. Apart from regional uncertainties, the Mission enters an interim period that reflects the continuity of its activities. Assistance to the Government with regard to capacity building will remain on the agenda throughout 2007 ensuring international standards are in place, as a precondition in meeting the foreign policy goals of the host country.

Future Work:

Plans of the Troika

In Zagreb, on 16 October 2006, under the Chairmanship of the EP, two seminars will be held on Judicial reform and on Parliamentary Control of the Security Sector.

The principal aim of the workshop devoted to the issue of judicial reform is to strengthen the capacity of parliamentary committees in charge of drafting legislation in the field of judicial reform and of overseeing the process of implementation of that legislation. The intention is to invite international experts as well as people that were directly involved in the judicial reform process in one or several countries of the region. The discussion should focus on experiences of judicial reform in SEE countries and the role of parliaments in the overall process. It should pay particular attention to the technical aspects of the process of parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the judicial reform legislation.

The seminar on Parliamentary control of the security sector should help identify the criteria which contribute to enhancing the efficiency of parliamentary control of the security sector and, consequently increasing the overall transparency of the defence and security sectors.

Under next year's chairmanship, two follow-up seminars should take place on practical issues of budgetary and of security sector oversight. There have also been proposals to organize a meeting on issues of social cohesion. Of course, the outcome of the status talks on Kosovo will also have an impact of the agenda of the PA for South-East Europe.

Elections:

The upcoming national elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Montenegro, both in the first week of October 2006, will be the next highlight of the PA activities in South East Europe.

