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OSCE
MAGA
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Change and continuity in Kosovo:
The OSCE as monitor and mentor

The OSCE: A toolkit for troubled times
Interview with the Secretary General

The power of ideals:
Narrowing the gender gap



Handling crisis
in the Caucasus



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- OSCE Mission to Serbia
- OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

Message from the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo (UNOSEK)



Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to brief the OSCE participating States on the political process for determining Kosovo's future status. Since then, intensive negotiations, including direct talks on technical issues, such as decentralization, Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage, community rights and the economy, have taken place in Vienna.

Although we have come a long way, we still have considerable work to do to bridge the gaps between the two parties as the year comes to a close and as the process, launched in November 2005, enters a critical phase.

On 20 September in New York, the Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group encouraged me to prepare a comprehensive proposal for a status settlement. Currently, UNOSEK has been working intensively on the preparation of the proposal, based on the discussions we have had so far with both parties and with our international interlocutors.

At this particular juncture in Kosovo's history, joint efforts to define the scope and scale of the international community's future engagement in the area have assumed added importance.

As I told participating States on 28 March, the OSCE will continue to play an important role in the post-status period. For one thing, a monitoring and institution-building role will be needed to assist municipal governments to fulfil their obligations. The Organization, as articles in this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* illustrate, is well-suited to carry out these tasks, since it has a unique and unrivalled ability to monitor conditions at the local level.

Our common objective is to ensure that the international community's future role in Kosovo is geared towards ensuring and assisting a democratic, stable, multi-ethnic and economically viable society. Let us all work closely together towards this goal.

Martti Ahtisaari
 Vienna
 October 2006

Photo: Zvečan/Zvečan, 24 August 2006: Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari in the eye of the media after his meeting with Kosovo-Serb mayors from northern Kosovo.

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Front cover: Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office, briefs journalists in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 2 October 2006, after resolving an escalating crisis over four Russian military officers. Behind him is Georgia's Ambassador to the EU, Salome Samadashvili. AP photo/Shakh Aivazov
Back cover: A view of Tbilisi by Eric Gourlan

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Handling crisis in Georgia

On 2 October, Georgian officials handed four Russian military officers, whom they had charged with espionage, over to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht. The officers were then taken in OSCE vehicles to Tbilisi International Airport, where they boarded a Russian Emergencies Ministry aircraft and left the country. Martha Freeman, Spokeswoman of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, witnessed the events as they unfolded.

On the surface, this was an unusual course of action for the OSCE, but considering the rate at which tension had been escalating over the previous days, and the “diplomatic reach” and *raison d’être* of the Organization, it becomes clear why the OSCE was in a perfect position to broker an urgently-needed solution.

The row between Tbilisi and Moscow erupted on 27 September, when the Georgian Government arrested several Russian officers on espionage charges. The media and the public in both countries digested the story, as well as defiant comments from both sides. Russia dismissed the accusations. Georgia said it had evidence to back up the arrests. The two neighbours had staked out their positions unequivocally. Although agreement had to be reached quickly, neither side seemed prepared to back down.

On 29 September, the main channel for direct diplomatic dialogue on the ground was closed off when the Russian Ambassador to Georgia was recalled for consultations, and Moscow began evacuating Russian diplomatic staff and families, and stopped issuing visas to Georgian citizens.

At this point, the Chairman-in-Office was already engaged in intensive discussions with Georgian Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, as well as with

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, who were pressing for a diplomatic solution.

Two days later, Minister De Gucht’s Belgian Government plane touched down at Tbilisi International Airport. The Chairman-in-Office headed for the city, where he was to broker an unusual arrangement and peacefully resolve the crisis over the arrested military officers.

After meetings with the Georgian leadership, the Chairman-in-Office arrived at the Prosecutor-General’s Office, where the four Russian officers who were in custody were handed over to the OSCE at a ceremony organized in the presence of reporters and television cameras. President Saakashvili said he had ordered the four officers to be deported in what he called a gesture of goodwill.

Welcoming the release, Minister De Gucht said he was pleased that the OSCE had been able to find a

solution to the issue and to help defuse the considerable tension that had developed between the two States, adding: “Conflict prevention is a main focus for the OSCE. In terms of our comprehensive security agenda, it was logical and vital to help effectively manage this crisis.”



Tbilisi International Airport, 2 October 2006.

OSCE/STEVEN WEINBERG

At a joint press conference, President Saakashvili expressed gratitude to the OSCE for its efforts to resolve the situation. A few days later, Russian President Vladimir Putin wrote to Minister De Gucht to thank him for working closely with Minister Lavrov on the transfer of the Russian officers.

Minister De Gucht has made it clear that he is remaining in touch with both sides and is ready to use the OSCE’s proven good offices to help mediate between the two participating States, should they request it.

As he stated in an opinion piece in the *International Herald Tribune*, much work remains to be done. “End of story? Absolutely not. Tensions have not eased,” Minister De Gucht wrote. “It is not enough to return to the way things were before this crisis erupted.”



INTERVIEW WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL

The OSCE: Still tested as a toolkit for troubled times

Marc Perrin de Brichambaut places great emphasis on the OSCE's continued relevance as a toolkit for troubled times, but he knows that tests lie ahead. In an interview with OSCE Spokesperson Martin Nesirky and Senior Adviser Dov Lynch, the Secretary General spelled out his concern about frozen conflicts heating up again and outlined the achievements of the Organization and the challenges it is facing.

August 2005, northern Kosovo: Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut listens to the concerns of Kosovo-Serb residents of the village of Svinjare/Frashër, which was destroyed during the outbreak of violence in March 2004 and has now been rebuilt. Photo: OMIK/Hasan Sopa

Why is the OSCE still relevant in a changing world? Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut: Ideally, international organizations should fulfil a task and once they have done so, move along. There is still an enormous amount to be done in the OSCE within the very broad mandate it has received from participating States. This is certainly true in terms of what the initial function of the OSCE was: a forum for security.

Unfortunately, we have not mastered all the crises. In fact, we may be moving towards a resurgence of some of them, especially in terms of the second wave of OSCE activities: helping to promote a transition towards a broad array of values recognized in the Paris Charter [see page 6]. Clearly, there is still a lot to be done there. We have field operations precisely to address the requests of participating States; our field activities are perpetually being reviewed by our hosts, by donor countries and by other concerned States. This is working. We have a lot on our plate.

And of course having an organization based on permanent debate and the elaboration of a set of basic values in a complex and mobile world is very useful. We carry out our mission in a way that is quite unique among international organizations: we serve as a place where three continents meet and continuously discuss the impact of values on security and society as well as trends in international relations. This makes the OSCE truly relevant for the 21st century. **How would you describe the distilled essence of the OSCE? What is its mission statement?**

The OSCE exists to provide participating States with security in all its dimensions through continuous co-operation and debate

Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 20 November 1990. The signatories of the Charter of Paris are honoured at a dinner by their French hosts.



The Charter of Paris for a New Europe, a landmark in the Helsinki Process, was signed by 34 Heads of State and Government on 21 November 1990 at a three-day summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the OSCE's forerunner.

The Charter represented the first multilateral instrument to take stock of the end of the cold war and the opening of a new era. The signatories reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the CSCE/OSCE.

"The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended," the participants proclaimed. "We declare that, henceforth, our relations will be founded on respect and co-operation. Europe is liberating itself from the legacy of the past. The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe."

It continued: "Ours is a time for fulfilling the hopes and expectations our peoples have cherished for decades: steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries."

The Charter of Paris heralded the beginning of the transformation of the CSCE into the OSCE, with the establishment of a Secretariat, an Office for Free Elections in Warsaw (later to become the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, or ODIHR) and a Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. It also created the Summits, the annual Ministerial Councils, the Council of Senior Officials (later replaced by the Permanent Council) and the Parliamentary Assembly.

about shared values. I think this would be the core message. It's a very demanding one and, therefore, one that has to be promoted, explained and discussed for it to be understood.

How could the OSCE better explain what it does?

We have to work with our participating States because they have a primary responsibility as stakeholders in the Organization's ambitions.

We are also — and this is something special about the OSCE — continuously working with all sectors of civil society. Civil society is business, media, political parties, non-governmental organizations. Civil society plays a vibrant role in today's world: witness the use of the Internet in all aspects of our lives. We have to be able to address our outreach activities to all branches. Wherever there is a debate about values, or about security, we should be able to make a contribution.

Naturally, we are not alone. We will act as part of a network. We will act where we can bring in some expertise as a niche player, and we will act by adding an innovative element. **Where would you place the OSCE in the context of international relations at the start of the 21st century?**

International relations are obviously at an interesting juncture. There are trends that may be pointing towards increasing unpredictability, divergence, and a need for global society to reorganize itself and find new modes of governance and co-operation.

The OSCE is fairly well suited to such a fluid phase because it is an open forum where everybody is on an equal footing, where there is a great variety of backgrounds, and where people are used to talking to each other and listening to each other.

This is true not only in the Permanent Council, where there are ambassadors, but also in dozens of meetings organized by the OSCE in all spheres of life, seemingly at every moment throughout the year. It is often the only organization involved in certain issues. Take some of the aspects of combating trafficking in human beings. Take co-operation in the field of police modernization. These OSCE activities are highly relevant to international affairs.

What has been the OSCE's most important achievement since you became Secretary General?

I have been fortunate because in the last year or so, we have had a sort of sunny spell. We have been fortunate to have been able to move forward in our reform efforts and in creating more common approaches among participating States.

By and large, it has been a positive period of consolidation. We have had a few success stories — the process of Montenegrin independence, the very good outcome of elections in many countries, and the hard work done by our field operations in building up institutions wherever we are present — and we are now in 19 different places.

But the weather can change. After the sun there may be rain. I am concerned about the current tension between Russia and Georgia.

What do you see as the OSCE's main priorities up to the end of this year and into 2007?

Because there are centrifugal forces at work within the OSCE, keeping the Organization together is in itself always an important objective to bear in mind. In the coming months, there will be serious problems that will test the OSCE. But the proof of the OSCE's effectiveness does not always lie in providing all the answers at any given moment, but in providing a place where

those answers can be found over time and where disruptive factors to peace and stability can be restrained.

Where do you see those problems?

We have a number of events ahead of us that have the potential to change the weather. There are various referendums that have been called in areas where the OSCE has responsibility. There may be decisions taken at the United Nations regarding the status of Kosovo. There is competition in certain areas between some of our participating States. All these have the potential to evolve in a way that may not necessarily be “soft”.

What is your view on the Secretary General having a stronger role inside the Organization?

Within their mandates, the Secretary General and the Secretariat serve participating States and provide them with assistance. If there is a desire for us to be active on specific issues, we are available to do so. We can be moderately pro-active in moving things forward when there is a problem. But we certainly cannot come in where we are not invited or requested to do so. I think this is our basic rule.

I have noticed a trend towards increasing demands on the Secretariat to get involved and do things. One of the latest requests put to the Secretariat, for example, is the OSCE-led international mission this October to assess the environmental impact of fires in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

How important are the five Asian and six Mediterranean Partners to the OSCE? What's in it for the OSCE and what's in it for them?

Most of the Partners are close to the OSCE geographically. They are also close to the OSCE in terms of values, so we have much to share and discuss with one another. They are Partners by choice — by mutual choice.

There is a great deal that we can and should do together — whether it is enhancing vital security concerns such as migration, and the dialogue of cultures, or tackling practical matters concerning drug trafficking, violent extremism and terrorism.

So, you see, the scope for building on the relationship with the Partners and moving them progressively towards the values and processes of the OSCE is enormous. We should be quite active in promoting this approach.

Is there scope for other countries to become Partners?

For those interested in sharing the OSCE's values, there is always scope to get closer to its work. But as I mentioned earlier, it is a mutual relationship.

How serious is the OSCE and its management about increasing the number of women at a senior level in the Organization?

The management of the OSCE depends on the good will and the support of participating States. We need strong women candidates for all jobs in order to fulfil the Gender Action Plan that has been adopted. We will be moving, I am sure, as fast as the presence of such candidates allows.

What has been the biggest surprise for you since taking the job?

The fascinating thing about the OSCE is that, in a way, it's a miracle that it continues to work. This is an Organization that is absolutely unique in its extreme decentralization, in the rule of consensus among very different States, and in the exceptional ambition and scope of its missions and the mandates it has set for itself.

In spite of this very unusual set-up that has been created over the years, it works. The Secretary General can, of course, make a significant contribution to ensure that it continues to work.

Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut took office as Secretary General of the OSCE in June 2005, but he is far from a newcomer to the Organization. He served as France's Head of Delegation to what was then the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) from 1991 to 1994 and most of his career has been linked in some way to aspects of security. Prior to his OSCE appointment, he served as Director for Strategic Affairs at the French Defence Ministry. Born in Rabat, Morocco, he is a graduate of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris. Appointed by the Ministerial Council for a term of three years, the Secretary General acts as the representative of the Chairman-in-Office and as OSCE chief administrative officer, and derives authority from the collective decisions of participating States.



The Secretary General with Senior Adviser Dov Lynch (left) and OSCE Spokesperson Martin Nesirky (right).



24 July 2006, Palais Niederösterreich, Vienna: Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel and UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari greet the Kosovo delegation to the high-level talks on Kosovo's status, led by President Fatmir Sejdiu and Hashim Thaçi, President of the Democratic Party of Kosovo.

UNOSSEK

INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR WERNER WNENDT

Change and continuity

Helping Kosovo institutions run themselves

Since 1999, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been devoting its energies to building confidence in the electoral process, developing the Assembly of Kosovo, training an entirely new police force, empowering and overseeing the media, improving the efficiency of the courts, and nurturing the growth of civil society. Seven years later, says Head of Mission Werner Wnendt, the time has come for the OSCE to wind down its role of creating democratic institutions and to focus instead on addressing their inadequacies. In an interview with Senior Public Information Officer Nikola Gaon, Ambassador Wnendt explains the Mission's new strategy.

Nikola Gaon: *This year is considered crucial in defining the future of Kosovo as it embarks on the next chapter in its history. What role is the OSCE playing in this process?*

Ambassador Werner Wnendt: The year 2006 is indeed a crucial one for Kosovo. We have seen the beginning of talks on its future status and it is expected that towards the end of the year we will know more about the outcome of the talks.

It is also a decisive year for the international presence in Kosovo as a whole. On the one hand, we have to push even more

for the implementation of the Standards for Kosovo [see page 12]; on the other hand, we have to get ready for the international community's possible future role after Kosovo's status has been defined.

While the OSCE is not directly involved in the discussions on status, we are contributing to the two processes I have just mentioned. We will be continuing to work with the institutions of Kosovo regardless of what its status may be. Our work includes strengthening democratic institutions at the central and municipal levels, which also needs to be done regardless of status.

What have been the Mission's key priorities in 2006?

In mid-2005, when we began planning for this year, we anticipated that status talks would start in 2006.

Therefore, we started strengthening our presence in the field by turning our field offices into five Regional Centres [see map, page 10], each of which covers between five and nine municipalities. More impor-



The Serbian delegation, led by President Boris Tadić, Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica and Foreign Minister Vuk Drašković arrive at the high-level talks under the aegis of UNOSEK.

UNOSEK

tantly, we established Municipal Teams and deployed them to all 30 municipalities and three pilot municipal units.

With two international and three local staff members, each Municipal Team monitors the work of local authorities, offers expert advice on good governance and human rights issues, and assists in the implementation of the Standards.

Similar efforts are occurring at the central level, where we work with, monitor and advise the Assembly of Kosovo, the Government and the judicial system.

So what we have seen in 2006 thus far is the beginning of the transition in the work of the Mission in Kosovo — from its previous role as the “Institution-Building Pillar” of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), to pro-active participation in monitoring local institutions aimed at the implementation of the Standards and status.

How is the Mission going about focusing on its priorities?

Our restructured field presence is the most visible sign that we have changed the way we do our work. The concept of pro-active monitoring was introduced so that we can concentrate on institutional development and capacity-building.

This is a great change from the Mission’s previous practice in the field. We now have a team of experts responsible for one single municipality, whereas in the past, human

rights, democratization and election experts worked separately from each other in a number of municipalities.

At the central level, we also pro-actively monitor the Parliamentary Assembly and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). We monitor, and we report. The reporting then leads to the formulation of a response to what was observed. In some cases, the response takes the form of a capacity-building activity. In other cases, we may also help create an additional institutional body, such as an office for property issues, in municipalities where that is necessary. If our interventions are not helpful, we can call upon the remaining authority of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General.

What are the main obstacles to fulfilling the Mission’s priorities?

Internally, one of the difficulties we faced was how to quickly staff our Municipal Teams with qualified candidates from OSCE participating States. This is where the Mission would appeal to all delegations to put forward more candidates.

Concerning targets set externally — for example, the performance of institutions and Standards implementation — one sees a mixed picture.

Let us take the Assembly, which is the highest elected body of the PISG, as an example. After some initial teething pains,



it now holds regular plenary sessions; its committees function in a much better way than just a year ago; and the new Assembly Presidency is much better at co-ordinating and steering the Assembly sessions.

At the same time, the Assembly has only just managed, with great delay, to put the legislation and proper procedures in place for the appointment of a new local ombudsman. Developing and implementing legislation is certainly an area where more progress needs to be made in the future.

In general, some of the work is slowed down by delays in work processes — not only within the PISG structures, but also within the international administration, which, in itself, is a very complex system. Nonetheless, I am not at all disappointed by the successes we have achieved so far in implementing our priorities in 2006.

Kosovo is now entering the final phase of the assessment of Standards towards a future-status settlement. How would you assess the work of the PISG in achieving Standards?

I think that the PISG have greatly improved the way they work. The Government and the Assembly are now more comparable with their counterparts in more developed political systems.

Firstly, the Assembly has come a long way from a situation where there was no opposition; now it functions normally.

Secondly, Kosovo's institutions have become aware of the fact that implementing Standards is not just a prerequisite for the definition of status; doing so is also in the interest of the people of Kosovo and needs to continue after its status has been defined. There is also more awareness that it is one thing to agree on a piece of legislation, and another thing to be capable of implementing it and be ready to do so — that is much harder.

Thirdly, politicians are now showing greater willingness to reach out to Kosovo's minority communities.

There are still deficits of course. Not all the ministries work in the same way, and not everything is implemented properly, but there has been a tremendous change since I came to Kosovo 17 months ago.

Kosovo Institutions

The OSCE has played a leading role in establishing the following:

- Criminal Defence Resource Centre
- Central Election Commission *
- Central Election Commission Secretariat *
- Elections Complaints and Appeals Commission *
- Kosovo Judicial Institute +
- Kosovo Law Centre
- Kosovo Media Institute
- Kosovo Police Service School *+
- Kosovo Centre for Public Safety Education and Development *+
- Ombudsman Institution *+
- Police Inspectorate of Kosovo *
- Press Council *
- Radio Television Kosovo *+
- Temporary Media Commissioner (now Independent Media Commission) *+

The OSCE has been providing substantive support to the following:

- Assembly of Kosovo and its Presidency and Committees *
- Criminal and Civil Courts *
- Kosovo Institute for Public Administration *
- Kosovo Police Service *
- Municipalities (30) and Municipal Pilot Units (3) *
- Office of the Prime Minister *
- University of Pristina *

* being monitored by the OSCE

+ handover to local authorities set for 2006



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Kosovo Assembly in session.

You mentioned that the Mission is now focusing on institutional development and that it has introduced the concept of pro-active monitoring into its work. What brought about these developments?

The situation in Kosovo is changing, and along with it, so is the role of the international community. For the OSCE, this has meant moving on from institution-building to institutional development and capacity-building.

We also needed to monitor the work of the institutions, and not only those that the OSCE helped create, but all the institutions involving the Government, the judiciary and the police.

So these were the factors we had in mind when developing the Mission's programme for 2006, which then led to the introduction of the concept of pro-active monitoring.

This approach needs to continue into 2007 as well. We may soon see the status settlement and the whole transitional period after that. We may come to the end of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), and the UN Interim Administration. There might be a new UN resolution. And there might be a new decision by the OSCE Permanent Council regarding what the Mission will be doing in Kosovo. This may all happen in 2007 or it may not, but we need to plan for 2007. We will continue to restructure the Mission and strengthen our monitoring and capacity-building position.

This year, we restructured our field presence and next year we intend to restructure our Headquarters in Pristina. We will have a department dealing with human rights and decentralization, as well as with minority issues, cultural heritage and internally displaced persons. This department will closely follow Kosovo's status process and the implementation of the status settlement.

We will also have another department focusing on democratic institutions and democratization as a whole. It will work with central institutions such as the Parliamentary Assembly, the Government, political parties and electoral bodies.

Then we will have a department especially for security issues that are related to Kosovo's status and its implementation — and also beyond that.

So by restructuring Headquarters, we hope to strengthen the capacity of the Mission to react to the challenges that lie ahead.

How have our local partners been reacting to the change in the Mission's approach to its work?

I can confidently say that the reaction to the restructuring of our field presence has been very positive. Municipal staff now

know their counterparts at the OSCE and maintain permanent contact with them. The people in the municipalities appreciate the fact that the OSCE has become more visible and easier to approach.

The expectation among all the communities, both majority and minority, as well as among politicians, is that the OSCE will stay on after Kosovo's status has been defined. They want us to help them deal with challenges concerning human rights, democratic institutions, the judiciary and the police.

Where do you see the OSCE Mission in five years?

I think that five years from now, the OSCE will still be in Kosovo, not because we want to be, but because there is still a lot the OSCE can do as an organization responsible for co-operation and security in Europe.

How exactly our work will look like, and how much of it will be linked to status implementation and to an ongoing Standards implementation process is very difficult to say right now.

Therefore, I would not like to make speculative suggestions, but again, I think that it is almost certain that the OSCE will be in Kosovo in five years' time because all the communities want us to be here. There is still much that the OSCE can contribute to the improvement of people's lives in Kosovo.

Ambassador Werner Wnendt has been serving as Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo since April 2005. Within UNMIK, he also acts as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Institution-Building. Earlier, he served as the Senior Deputy High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Foreign Affairs Adviser to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Pristina, 3 October 2006. Ambassador Werner Wnendt, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (right), with Ambassador Joachim Rucker, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of UNMIK since 1 September 2006. Both are seasoned German diplomats.



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Standards and status

The *Standards for Kosovo*, launched by the United Nations in December 2003, describe a Kosovo where:

- public institutions are representative and democratic;
- the rule of law is effective, respected and accessible to all;
- all individuals, regardless of ethnic background, can travel and work safely, and use their languages anywhere and in any institution of Kosovo;
- internally displaced persons are free and able to return to Kosovo without hindrance, threat or intimidation;
- the framework for a functioning market economy is in place;
- property rights are fairly enforced to encourage returns and the equal treatment of all ethnic communities;
- a constructive dialogue is taking place with Belgrade

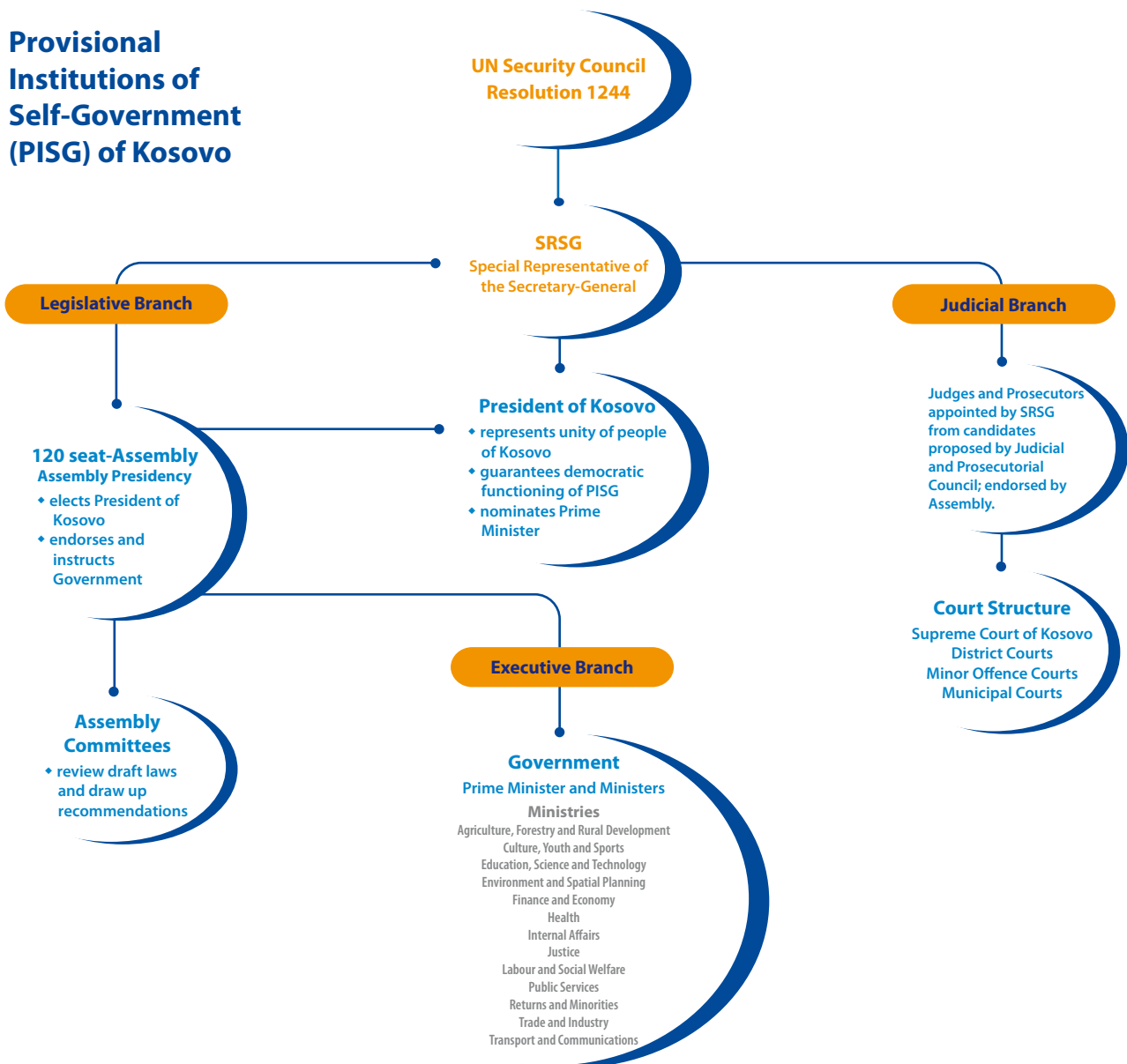
and stable and peaceful relations exist with regional neighbours; and

- the Kosovo Protection Corps operates strictly within its mandate.

In short: “A Kosovo where all — regardless of ethnic background, race and religion — are free to live, work and travel without fear, hostility or danger and where there is tolerance, justice and peace for everyone.”

The Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, issued in March 2004, sets out in great detail measures that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (below) should take to meet the Standards, with the help of the OSCE and other partners. The plan, which is constantly reviewed to reflect changing realities, has received even greater attention since the start of the status talks.

Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) of Kosovo





Monitoring at the grassroots

Klinë/Klina schools get a report card

In line with the OSCE Mission's new drive to keep its ears closer to the ground, members of the Municipal Team in Klinë/Klina, one of 33 such teams throughout Kosovo, set out to see for themselves how children's basic rights were being promoted and respected within the educational system.

Teachers, students and parents in Klinë/Klina, a city of more than 32,000 in Kosovo's Peja/Peć region, cannot remember a time when their educational system received so much scrutiny. From April to June this year, the three OSCE staff members who are responsible for monitoring the municipality visited every single one of its 16 schools.

In the village of Siqevë/Sićeve, the OSCE Municipal Team heard complaints from students about their school's lack of potable water. In Shtaricë/Štarice, two 14-year-old girls had stopped coming to classes. And in more than one village, incidents of teachers slapping children as a "disciplinary measure" came to light.

Together with the Co-ordinator for Children's Rights in Klinë/Klina, the team presented a comprehensive report, including a request for concrete remedial measures, to key municipal officials.

"After receiving a response, we will follow up with more action to ensure that the problems have been addressed satisfactorily," says the Monitoring Team's Human Rights Officer, Dominique Bush. "This October, we're organizing a workshop on children's rights and education for the municipality's Education Directorate and the Ministry."

However, some situations cannot afford to wait until they get worse. As an immediate measure, the local Director of Education has barred physically abusive teachers from being part of the school faculty this coming school year.

"We're not just interested in gathering information and being an early warning system," says Jens Modvig, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Pro-active monitoring aims at results. It's our way of helping municipal officials improve their problem-solving skills and to lead in a transparent, service-oriented and consultative manner."

Obviously, Mr. Modvig adds, there is no such thing as a universal solution. "If a deficiency in governance can't be fixed, we always go one step further. As a last resort, the OSCE Mission and the UN Department

First day of school
in Klinë/Klina.

Photo: OMiK/Hasan Sopa



OMIK/HASAN SOPA

Monitoring health issues in Klinë/Klina: On a visit of a satellite health clinic in the village of Jagodë/Jagoda, OSCE monitors Dominique Bush (left) and Astrit Muhaxhiri talk to municipal official Hatixhe Berisha (right).

of Civil Administration can recommend that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General use his reserved powers and intervene. In many cases, it is a matter of enforcing laws and executive orders.”

“Civil servants and politicians should be able to explain what they are doing to improve the lives of the people they are meant to serve,” Dominique Bush says. “Pro-active monitoring fosters the principle of public accountability. Everyone should be made to feel that they are equal members of the same society.”

She cautions that this does not mean that the relationship between the OSCE and local officials should be adversarial: on the contrary, the new OSCE approach fosters a constructive partnership.

MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS

“The presence of the OSCE Municipal Team in our midst has been making a tangible difference to the way we run our affairs,” says Prenkë Gjetaj, President of the Municipal Assembly of Klinë/Klina. “We’re being helped to interpret regulations properly and to implement laws and decisions more quickly.”

Elsewhere in Kosovo, on-site co-operation between municipalities and OSCE Municipal Teams has led to major breakthroughs in



OMIK/HASAN SOPA

Improved services for the benefit of Malishevë/Malisevo residents are the focus of discussions among Haki Krasniqi (centre), director of the municipality’s public administration, and OSCE monitors Kreshnik Basha (left) and Olivier Bricet.

the protection of cultural heritage and in the overall inter-ethnic dialogue.

Malishevë/Mališevo has adopted the municipality statement on equal employment opportunities. Ashkali refugees have been able to return to Rahovec/Orahovac. Minority languages in Suharekë/Suva Reka can now be used officially. Taken together, these individual developments represent significant progress towards the implementation of actions called for under the Standards for Kosovo [see page 12].

Still, a host of wide-ranging issues will continue to pose a challenge both to municipalities and to the OSCE’s 33 Municipal Teams throughout Kosovo for some time to come.

Bringing citizens closer to the budget process, enabling minorities to be represented on municipal bodies, and implementing the newly adopted Code of Conduct for Civil Servants are just some of the items on municipal officials’ lengthy for-action list.

As the settlement of Kosovo’s status approaches, the international community will be keeping track of the overall performance rating of local institutions in creating a sustainable, multi-ethnic and democratic society.



The OSCE Magazine’s special focus on Kosovo was made possible with the help of the Press and Public Information Office of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Members of the production team are (from left): Assistant Public Information Officer Hasan Sopa, Spokesperson Sven Lindholm, Deputy Spokesperson Florence Marchal, and Senior Public Affairs Officer Nikola Gaon, team leader.



Who's policing the Kosovo Police?

Independent watchdog is unique to the region

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been playing a dynamic leadership role in the shaping and forming of a professional indigenous police force — one of the most widely hailed contributions to the safety and security of citizens in post-conflict Kosovo. Seven years on, the Mission's institution-building task comes full circle as it finds itself at the forefront of a bold and radical approach to policing the Police.

Steve Bennett, a former Lieutenant-Colonel in the U.S. Marines, looks back to that auspicious day in September 1999 when, under OSCE management, the neglected facilities of Serbia's police school in Vushtri/Vučitir, 25 kilometres north of Pristina, reopened their doors to a first group of 176 cadets.

It had been a mere two months since the Permanent Council in Vienna had agreed to establish a Pristina-based OSCE Mission as an integral, but distinct, part of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Inspectors Bekim Lajqi and Hysni Gashi (right) interview (from left) Officer Ejup Berisha, Lt. Col. Goran Stojanović and Captain Jeton Regjepi about road traffic performance.
Photo: OMIK/Hasan Sopa

“We've trained literally every one of the more than 7,000 officers who make up today's Kosovo Police Service (KPS) — from the newly appointed Police Commissioner down to crime investigators and patrol officers,” says Mr. Bennett. He has been serving as Director of the school from day one, and also heads the Mission's Department of Police Education and Development.

“With Kosovo moving closer towards a settlement of its final status, we started shifting our attention to the managerial capacity of the Police Service. We were concerned about how its professionalism and adherence to respect for human rights could be sustained after our departure,” Mr. Bennett says.

The key question he and his colleagues asked themselves was: “What kind of mechanism will be likely to ensure that law-enforcers are held to account for *what* they do and *how* they do it?”

This led to the creation of the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo (PIK), an independent oversight body and the Provisional Government's newest institution — and possibly the last that the OSCE would create from the ground up.

By the time the Provisional Government's Ministry of Internal Affairs was created in April this year, inheriting police oversight from UNMIK as one of its most crucial tasks, the OSCE had already done the spade-work for the Inspectorate.



OMIKYH/ASANI SCIPA



OSCE/LUBOMIR KOTEK

Continuing training and education offered by the Kosovo Police Academy (above) and an emphasis on professionalism (top photo) have helped make the Kosovo Police Service one of the best models of democratic policing in the region. In June 2006, the 32nd class of police cadets graduated from the Academy, with members of minority communities making up 24 per cent — the highest percentage so far.

“At that point we had helped draft the legislation to create the Inspectorate, designed its structure, drawn up its budget, and made sure it would have offices and equipment during its first year of operations,” says Frank Harris, Project Manager of the Police Inspectorate Implementation Programme, which has a mostly-local staff of 15.

Mr. Harris says that the Inspectorate is a “radical departure” from standard police oversight in many parts of the world, where the investigation and inspection of the police are an integral part of the police force itself.

The Police Inspectorate of Kosovo is unusual in that:

- It combines two functions: investigating complaints of serious police misconduct *and* evaluating police performance in crucial management-related areas;
- It is run by a multi-ethnic team of civil servants, not police officers; and
- It measures management performance and conducts investigations in line with the principles set out in the European Code of Police Ethics.

The inauguration of the new body on 28 June at its temporary OSCE training centre in Pristina served as the occasion to introduce its carefully chosen staff — a Chief Inspector and his inspection team of 20, all university graduates. Along with some 300 applicants, they had gone through a rigorous test, jointly designed by the OSCE and the Ministry, to reveal their potential in report-writing and analysis.

“It was the first time that an examination had ever been used in the Kosovo Civil Service,” says Mr. Harris proudly.

Training Manager Steve Smith also has his own reasons to be pleased. An entirely new curriculum, tailor-made by the OSCE to go right through the core of the Inspectorate’s mission, is off to a flying start.

Training in **management inspection**, the focus of the programme’s first phase, has been under way since July and will last eight months.

Meting out justice, fairly

Any member of the public can file a complaint of police misconduct to a police station, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, or directly to the Inspectorate.

Offences committed by uniformed and civilian police officers that are deemed “serious” by the Inspectorate — as defined by law — are referred to the Senior Police Appointments and

Discipline Committee, which conducts a hearing to determine whether or not the accused is guilty as charged.

The Committee, which is multi-ethnic and completely independent of the Police Service, comprises senior civil servants and senior municipal representatives.

The Police Commissioner, in close consultation with the Minister for Internal Affairs, determines the level of punishment.





Some 15 per cent of the Kosovo Police Service are female graduates of the Police Academy.



28 June 2006: Minister for Internal Affairs Fatmir Rexhepi (left) and Deputy Police Commissioner S. Ahmeti address the press at the launching of the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo.

“Inspectors will alternate between the classroom and the field,” says Mr. Smith. “They will learn to gather and analyse answers to such questions as: Are the police investigating crime properly? Are they proactively ensuring that every one — including members of minorities — is enjoying safety, security and freedom of movement? Are they developing and implementing strategies to reduce deaths and injuries on Kosovo’s roads?”

By the end of this year, he expects the inspectors to have applied some of their freshly acquired skills towards the production of the first *Annual Report on Kosovo Police Service Performance*, which will include recommendations for improvement.

Training in **investigating allegations of serious police misconduct**, the programme’s second phase, will start early next year and will last five months.

“Aside from case-file preparation, we will be placing a great deal of emphasis on ethical behaviour during interviews and investigations,” says Mr. Smith. “By June 2007, the Inspectorate should be ready and able to handle serious complaints from the public.”

Inspectors have the right to enter and inspect police stations and offices, interview officers regardless of rank, and seize police documents. “This bold approach to police oversight obviously carries risks,” Mr. Harris cautions.

“We remind inspectors that they should always try to strike just the right balance: they should recognize the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the police. The Inspectorate’s interim and annual reports will make a point of giving due recognition

to outstanding management performance and best practices.”

At the inaugural event, Interior Minister Fatmir Rexhepi urged police officers to consider the Inspectorate not as an “unwanted intrusion” into their work but as a “valuable advantage” in ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of police operations and their compliance with the law.

“It’s going to be a challenging year ahead but I’m confident we’ll get there,” Frank Harris says. He is currently writing a book reflecting on the strategy behind the Police Inspectorate, following a first book on the OSCE’s experience in the role of capacity-building in police reform (www.osce.org/kosovo).

“We hope that, just like the Police Academy, the Inspectorate will serve as living proof of Kosovo’s ability to meet the expectations of the international community at this crucial time. We hope too that, just like the Academy, this final OSCE-initiated capacity-building institution will figure prominently in the ongoing debate about the nature of police reform in post-conflict societies.”

May 2006: UNMIK Police Commissioner Kai Vittrup (centre) pledged full support for the work of the independent police oversight organization at a meeting with Frank Harris, Manager of the Police Inspectorate project (right), and Steve Smith, Training Manager (left).





The power of ideals

Why we must stay the course in narrowing the gender gap

Despite the dramatic advances in women's rights over the past three decades, why do we still have to explain over and over again that it does not make sense to leave one-half of the population out of the mainstream of society? Why is it often a long stretch from declarations of intent to actual implementation? The Secretary General's first report rating the OSCE's performance in fulfilling its gender-related commitments is a reminder that the biggest hurdle we face is not so much decision-makers' open opposition to the gender aspect of our work, as their deep-seated lack of interest in, and understanding of, the significant role it plays in bringing about truly comprehensive security.

BY AMBASSADOR METTE KONGSHEM

As a young diplomat with the Norwegian Delegation to the United Nations in New York, I was responsible for the Third Committee of the General Assembly, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural matters. Gender issues figured prominently on the agenda. The first UN Conference on the status of women had just taken place in Mexico City in 1975.

Coming from a country that has always brought gender issues to the forefront, I felt fortunate to have arrived with the right "baggage" at the right place at the right moment.

Since then, considerable progress on the gender front has taken place in many countries around the world and in international organizations. Action-oriented strategies, legislation, new institutional mechanisms and educational programmes are enlightening minds, changing attitudes and heightening awareness.

Through the years, I, too, have come to identify closely with the concept behind the struggle for the equality of opportunities between men and women. Quite simply, I boil it down to a matter of fundamental fairness, justice and basic human rights.

But beyond that, it makes good economic sense. Empowering women to play a more dynamic role in all facets of everyday life gives a society "competitive advantage" in bringing about sustainable stability and security, as in the case of Norway and other countries.

These were the thoughts running through my mind when, in the autumn of 2003, I initiated the development of the OSCE's 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality while I

Coalition of Women's NGOs
in Tbilisi, Georgia.

was serving as Chairperson of the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking.

Why was this initiative necessary? After all, a lot of good work was already being carried out within the framework of the first Action Plan for Gender Issues, launched in 2000. My intention was not to reinvent the wheel, but to take our gender scheme on to the next level. The Organization lacked an overarching strategy that would ensure the systematic implementation of action measures and, at the same time, serve to hold managers accountable for carrying it out.

By dint of determination and hard work by delegations and the Secretariat, we reached consensus on just such a strategy, as set out in the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

Less than two years after the document was adopted by the Ministerial Council in Sofia in December 2004, another milestone was reached when the Secretary General devoted a first-ever report to the Permanent Council in June 2006 on how the Organization was living up to its gender commitments. This was a direct follow-up of the implementation measures in the Action Plan, and will be an annual event.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

- A gender-balanced organization performs better across the board. In our efforts to rebuild post-conflict societies, strengthen human rights, fight intolerance, resolve frozen conflicts, forestall tensions, and confront a complex array of security challenges, we need to draw on the creativity, experience and talent of both men and women.
- If the OSCE is to be true to its comprehensive and cross-dimensional approach to security, it needs women as policy-makers, as negotiators and as peacemakers. We must simply reject the notion that the goal of gender equality is an isolated issue, to be tackled only within the confines of human-dimension activities.

Here is where the practice of “gender mainstreaming” is crucial. We should be looking closely at every official decision, every OSCE programme and project, and every conference and workshop, and asking ourselves: Does it address the specific needs and priorities of both men *and* women?

Let us focus on women’s special strengths. We have to start thinking of women as more than just victims of circumstances. I look forward to a time when project documents no longer carry the stock phrase, “women and other disadvantaged groups”.

One of the points of reference in the Gender Action Plan is UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which reaffirms women’s central role in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes — an area where the OSCE holds a definite advantage. For its part, Norway, which fully recognizes the importance of women’s involvement in all forms of peace- and democracy-building activities, has adopted its own plan for the resolution’s implementation.

TIMELY TOOL

A great deal of soul-searching has been taking place throughout the Organization in the past few years as we try to enhance its relevance and effectiveness. Talk of reform has been on everyone’s lips. We have been setting

Gender profile of the OSCE

As of 1 December 2005, women in the OSCE made up:

- 42 per cent of a total of 3,428 staff;
 - 0 per cent of heads of mission;
 - 3 out of 13 deputy heads of mission;
 - 45 per cent of support staff (G category);
 - 39 per cent of professional staff (P-1 to P-4, including national professionals in the field and staff seconded by governments);
 - 32 per cent of internationally contracted and seconded staff.
- In field missions, the proportion of women in this category varies widely — from 43 per cent in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 13 per cent in Georgia;
- 34 per cent of a total of 629 seconded staff members;
 - 34 per cent of a total of 87 support and professional staff contracted in 2005. Also in 2005, 580 men and 159 women applied for contracted posts at the P-5 level; and
 - 12 per cent of staff in managerial positions (P-5 and above; heads and deputy heads of mission; heads of institution). This percentage is higher than the level of 5 per cent at NATO but lags behind the 28 per cent at the International Organization for Migration and the 25 per cent at the European Parliament.

Source: The Secretary General’s first Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, issued June 2006. The statistics were gathered by the Department for Human Resources and the Gender Section with the aim of identifying key problem areas, improving recruitment strategies and calling participating States’ attention to the need to nominate more women for higher-level posts.

priorities, developing a strategic vision and improving the way we work in a changing security environment.

I believe that tapping into the fullest potential of both men and women is part and parcel of this process and that the Gender Action Plan serves as a timely tool to reshape our way of thinking.

“It is crucial that the OSCE ensure that its own house is in order since it assists participating States to promote equality of opportunity between men and women,” one of my colleagues said at the Permanent Council. I could not agree more.

We need only look at the dismally low numbers of female managers and policy-makers in OSCE structures, as mentioned in the Secretary General’s report, to convince ourselves of two things:

- We — and that includes participating States — have to continue exploring alternative approaches to identifying and nominating female candidates for senior positions.
- We should also continue examining how our Staff Regulations can catch up with other organizations’ best practices to foster a gender-sensitive working environment and family-friendly policies.

Furthermore, if we can agree one day on measures to strengthen the role of the Secretary General, this would, in my view, provide the position with sufficient “clout” to make a case for operational aspects of priority issues —

including the promotion of gender equality. The same holds true for staff responsible for gender matters in the Office of the Secretary General and for the gender focal points in the field. To be able to generate meaningful change, they need to be vested with greater authority and be more closely involved in the development of new policies and programmes.

However, such reform-related actions in the gender area will not be enough; they need the vigorous backing of gender-sensitive leadership at the highest levels, and by this I don't mean just the Secretary General. Chairmanships, managers, and heads of mission and institutions must send clear and positive signals that they wish to make a difference.

For a start, since managers are accountable for the Action Plan's performance, they should, at the very least, familiarize themselves with its contents and ensure that gender concerns do not take a back seat in favour of other "more pressing" or "more important" issues at various senior meetings.

I am encouraged by the progress made by the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities towards integrating gender into the mainstream of their activities. They have shown the way through a number of valuable activities and ideas, as described in the Secretary General's report.

LIVING DOCUMENT

Less than two years into the Action Plan, it is, of course, rather soon to expect dramatic strategic changes in the Organization. Considering our limited capacities and resources, what can we, the participating States, do to help the gender teams in the Secretariat and in the field, who are doing their utmost to shoulder their share of responsibilities under the Action Plan?

Mette Kongshem, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to the OSCE since September 2002, was Chairperson of the OSCE Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking in 2003-2004.

Her first diplomatic posting was in New York, with the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations. She later served as Counsellor with the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and as Ambassador to the Czech Republic (1996-1999).

Other positions she has held in Norway include Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Shipping (1981-1983) and Director-General responsible for European and North American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1999-2001).

Ambassador Kongshem holds a bachelor's degree in political science, and French and Nordic languages and literature from the University of Oslo. She also attended the NATO Defence College and the Norwegian Defence College.

I believe that it is incumbent on each one of us to propel the issue forward and let it gather steam. If we wish to demonstrate how serious we are about the tasks at hand in the gender arena, we should provide the Organization with the resources and the tools necessary to make the Action Plan a living document.

In our discussions in the Permanent Council, we should not neglect the gender perspective in the economic and environmental, as well as in the politico-military, dimensions. We should take the gender factor into account in drawing up conflict-related strategies and concrete projects and programmes. If the OSCE decides to proceed with security-sector reform, as recently proposed, we should make sure that gender is not left out of the equation.

It is in the nature of complex themes that the glass is often looked upon as half-empty as well as half-full. The good news is that the step-by-step implementation of the Gender Action Plan has triggered the development of a comprehensive gender mainstreaming process across OSCE structures, supported by a strengthened training programme. The common consensus is that gender issues have finally been placed in the spotlight. I look forward to the next report of the Secretary General, which I hope will take a more analytical approach.

The fact that women's concerns are now squarely on the OSCE's agenda can only bode well for the future. I am reminded of the words of the physician and humanist Albert Schweitzer, who said: "The power of ideals is incalculable. We see no power in a drop of water. But let it get into a crack in the rock and be turned into ice ... and it splits the rock."

The beginning of the implementation of the OSCE's Gender Action Plan is one such "crack in the rock".





Armenian women struggle to carve a niche in politics

For women in newly modernizing societies, gaining a foothold in politics is easier said than done, especially in countries that place a premium on patriarchy. This holds true in Armenia, despite women's share of traditional advantages: They continue to have the same access to education as men, spearhead many non-governmental organizations, and are the acknowledged "glue" that holds the family together, while also contributing substantially to Armenia's economic life. Seeking to address this paradox, the OSCE and its partners have embarked on activities aimed at motivating women to apply their leadership abilities in the political arena.

**BY BLANKA HANCILOVA AND
TATEVIK MELIKYAN**

Improving a woman's lot in Armenia, as in many other countries, is an uphill struggle. People in positions of authority — mostly male — tend to regard the goal of equal rights in a patronizing manner. According to popular thinking in this still-fragile democracy, other more pressing problems deserve to take centre stage. Even more disturbing is the fact that it

is not only men, but also women, who consider "gender" a non-issue.

"Most people think that denying the existence of gender-based discrimination, whether at the level of family or of society, will make the problem go away," says Nora Hakobyan, leader of the Women's Republican Council, a highly respected Armenian NGO.

Many of her colleagues agree that the blatant disregard for gender issues by the public at large is an even bigger factor in keeping women largely invisible in the political process than is a gender-insensitive governing structure.

Ms. Hakobyan is convinced that open discussions, followed by active remedial measures, will go a long way towards bringing the subject into the public domain. "Right now, however, there simply are not enough initiatives directed towards reaching out to women themselves," she says.

Some advocates for women's rights look back with nostalgia at the perceived merits

Photos, pages 21 to 23:
Women's Rights Centre in
Echmiadzin, Armenia.



of the old Soviet system, under which the “women’s question” was declared “solved” by integrating women into the political structure through established quotas. Others disagree, arguing that, in fact, discriminatory practices and attitudes continued to lurk in the background.

Both sides do tend to agree on one thing: Fifteen years after independence, Armenia has yet to install an effective mechanism that would once and for all demonstrate a determined political will by ensuring that women — who represent more than half of the country’s 3 million population — are not left out of the policy-making and decision-making process.

Although a comprehensive, six-year national action plan on improving women’s status was launched in 2004, and although a sound legal framework for equal rights exists, relatively little has changed on the ground.

Consider these numbers:

- Of 16 ministers, only one — the Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs — is a woman;
- Of 58 deputy ministers, only four are women;
- Of 131 parliamentarians — deputies in the National Assembly — only six are women, representing five per cent of the total;
- The situation is not much different in local governmental bodies: only four per cent of town mayors and five per cent of village councillors are women;
- Not a single woman has ever been appointed to the post of governor — ten seats in all — or to that of deputy governor since regional and local government bodies were established in 1996.

It is this profile of Armenian women’s political participation — or lack of it — that the country’s international partners have called “alarming”.

Many feel that this skewed picture risks

becoming even more so as men continue to seek job opportunities abroad and the proportion of women who head households increases further, leaving them with little time for self-help activities.

Jemma Hasratyan, head of Armenia’s Association of Women with a University Education, says that “women’s passive stance towards political involvement can be traced to a combination of “society’s generally low level of democratic political culture and women’s lack of political skills and experience”.

JOINING FORCES

In a widely hailed collaboration among international organizations and their local partners, the OSCE Office in Yerevan and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) joined forces with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Armenian Peace Coalition in August and September 2005 to encourage women to start taking an active interest in political affairs, starting with the municipal elections in autumn 2005.

Some 250 women, in groups of some 21 participants each, attended one of the 12 two-day seminars in Yerevan and ten other regions. Eleven Armenian trainers were hand-picked to teach skills in leadership, team-building and mobilization of communities, with a special focus on local electoral processes and legislation.

Since most of the women were either members of NGOs or came from the educational sector, the quality of the discussions was high, as was the interest, especially among the age group of 45 and above.

The seminars revealed one major impediment that deterred women from filing their candidacies for public office.

“It was interesting to find out that most of the participants did not believe that there was such a thing as free and fair elections”, says



Nora Hakobyan, who co-ordinated the training activities. “There were two camps: the skeptics, who felt that the polling process was not at all dependent on their involvement, and those who felt that their participation would be an expression of constructive civic engagement. The trainers organized a stimulating dialogue between these two groups.”

Although the results of the training seemed fairly modest — 21 women went on to run in the local elections, and of these, nine were voted into office — project sponsors felt it was a satisfactory start. In addition, several of the training participants joined campaign teams and election committees.

More importantly, says Jemma Hasratyan, surveys carried out by her NGO indicate that the idea of women seeking a greater voice in public life is now looked upon more favourably than before.

HEAD START

With two significant polls in sight — parliamentary elections in May 2007 and presidential elections in 2008 — it is crucial that Armenia make a head start in preparing the way for a fair, transparent and democratic mechanism with a more gender-balanced slate of candidates.

As part of their contribution, the OSCE Office in Yerevan and its international partners are currently drawing up a fact sheet setting out Armenia’s gender-related commitments and good practices in gender mainstreaming, which will be used as an awareness-raising tool.

The OSCE Office is also planning a two-day seminar on budget preparation from a gender perspective for deputies of the National Assembly and staff of key ministries. The Office will continue working with the UNDP on its project to enhance women’s roles in elections, both as voters and as candidates.

“I used to think that I should not get

involved in political parties because by doing so I might lose my ‘civic face’”, says Nora Hakobyan. “I was wrong. Now I realize — and I hope others will too — that on the contrary, it is a chance for us women to make our needs known. We have a lot of catching up to do with our neighbours’ more favourable gender-related indicators.”

Indeed, a great deal is at stake if too few Armenian women promote the gender agenda, which encompasses a whole range of worrying socio-economic trends — from high unemployment rates and unequal pay, through trafficking in women and domestic violence, to gender-biased reporting in the media and rural women’s neglected needs.

“The international community is doing what it can to enable government officials, politicians and the public to understand the issues better and to improve our ability to tackle them”, says Ms. Hakobyan. “The spark is being lit by our international partners but we — the men and women of Armenia — should be the ones getting all fired up and taking action.”

Blanka Hancilova (right) was Democratization Programme Manager at the OSCE Office in Yerevan from February 2004 to October 2006.

Tatevik Melikyan (left) worked on democratization issues at the OSCE Office in Yerevan and is now Civil Society Programme Co-ordinator at the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation in Armenia.



The wonders of networking

Professional women in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

It's a fact: The primary source of expertise in promoting equal rights and opportunities among women and men in many emerging States tends to be visiting consultants from established democracies. This transfer of knowledge is undoubtedly enriching and necessary, but it does not always lead to sustainable local initiatives. To address this gap, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has been nurturing home-grown talent through a regional network covering the Caucasus and Central Asia — with impressive results.



BY TIINA ILSÉN

The idea behind the NGO Expert Panel on Gender Equality, launched by the ODIHR in 2004, is straightforward: to assist women who have an intimate knowledge of their native environment to feel sufficiently capable and confident to develop tailor-made responses on their own.

Between them, the Panel members — 15 prominent leaders of civil society from Central Asia and the South Caucasus — represent hundreds of national organizational networks that are long-standing ODIHR partners within a wider programme. Now six years old, the programme, aimed at enhancing women's par-

ticipation in democratic processes at all levels of decision-making, has recently expanded its geographical scope to include the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine.

Adding great value to the Panel is the fact that its members represent a cross-section of professions and fields of interest. They are university professors, economists, medical professionals, journalists and women's rights activists. Individually and collectively, they have the potential of wielding a great deal of influence beyond their specializations.

Mira Karybaeva, a prominent civil society activist from Kyrgyzstan, says the Panel is driv-

Leadership development in Khudat, Azerbaijan.

en by a sense of common purpose: "We're all committed to making policy-makers in our countries realize that gender matters should not be considered as separate from political, economic and human-rights issues," she says.

Increasingly, Panel members are gaining the skills and expertise that they need to pursue that goal. With the help of ODIHR-sponsored seminars and workshops focusing on leadership, best practices and strategy development, the 15 women are discovering that they can bring their credibility to bear on bridging civil society and government initiatives in such crucial areas as drafting gender-related policies, developing national gender action plans and creating new gender-equality mechanisms.

Galina Petriashvili, who represents the Georgian journalists' association, *GenderMediaCaucasus*, says the Panel's composition makes perfect sense.

"Our countries have similar histories, similar problems, and similar laws, but in the gender area, we're all experiencing varying degrees of success. Through the Panel's activities, we are able to educate each other. Everyone benefits."

Panel members from Azerbaijan, for example, are about to develop a nationwide microcredit scheme and hope to adapt lessons from the work of Charita Jashi. An economics professor, she has undertaken in-depth research on the economic situation of women in Georgia and has been tapping their entrepreneurial spirit through business-oriented projects and self-help publications. She is drawing on the resources of a countrywide network in Georgia that was set up with the help of the ODIHR in 2000.

"Just a few years ago, the voices of NGOs were not heard by the Government," says Ms. Jashi. "Thankfully, we are beyond this phase in Georgia. Today, our recommendations are taken into account within the political process."

Zulfiya Tukhtakhodjaeva, who represents Uzbekistan's Association of Non-Governmental Women's Organizations, finds the Panel's information-sharing and joint plans of action extremely valuable in promoting national reforms in the gender area.

"We need all the help we can get to help women believe in themselves and overcome their fear of running for public office," she says.

Ms. Tukhtakhodjaeva cites the usefulness of the strategy document on increasing women's participation in policy-making processes that was developed by several women's organizations at a meeting in Kyrgyzstan in 2003. "We take the opportunity at these events to disseminate information and to present an objective picture of what is happening in our countries," she says.

The Panel's extensive region-wide focus has been made possible in the first place by the ODIHR's ongoing long-term investment in building robust national NGO networks and coalitions dedicated to gender issues.

Panel member Zulfiya Kochorbaeva from Kyrgyzstan recalls that in 1999, when her NGO, the Social Technologies Agency, took part in some of the ODIHR's small seminars on leadership for the first time, participants from her country hardly had any experience in dealing with gender issues.

Within five years, the situation would change dramatically. "With the support of the ODIHR, we set up a national network, 'Women Can Do It', which now has a membership of more than 50 women's organizations," she says. Living up to its name, the group has been able to help place qualified women in key positions in local self-government bodies, women's local councils and the electoral commission.

Recently, a ground-breaking development affirmed the network's sense of empowerment.

"After the parliamentary elections in March 2005, when not a single woman was elected," says Ms. Kochorbaeva, "we were able to lobby for the creation of a new post — that of a special presidential representative to parliament on gender issues. For the first time in Kyrgyzstan's history, a representative from a women's NGO was appointed to fill a senior governmental position."

Ms. Tukhtakhodjaeva, the member from Uzbekistan, says that coalition-building efforts among women in her country are also yielding results.

"We are able to speak loudly, with one voice," she says. "Before the 2004 elections, we managed to have our proposal for a 30 per cent quota for women on political parties' lists of candidates accepted. This increased the proportion of women in parliament from 8 to 18 per cent."

Buoyed by this achievement, women in Uzbekistan have already started preparing for the next elections, which are still five years away.

The women on the Expert Panel harbour no illusions that ingrained attitudes among certain sectors of society can be changed overnight. But they agree that the patient and persistent work of the ODIHR in building networks from the ground up has given rise to a high-level regional network that is just beginning to make its influence felt on governments and society at large.

Tiina Ilsen is Head of the Gender Unit of the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Images of women in the South Caucasus

In 2003, when French photographer Eric Gourlan was asked by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) if he would embark on a photographic assignment to the Caucasus focusing on gender issues, he seized the opportunity to visit not only the capitals of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, but also about a dozen rural villages.

"I have a passion for meeting people and discovering their cultural heritage," he says. "I don't like travelling just for travelling's sake. I like it

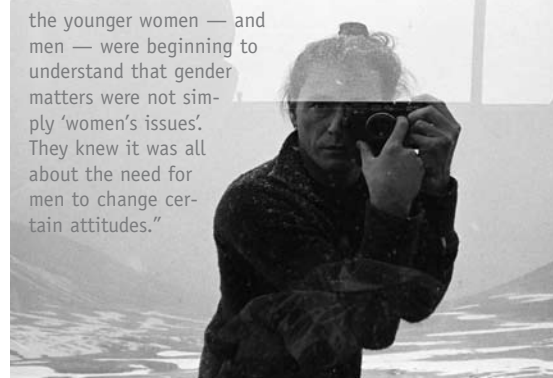
when I can serve as an 'eyewitness' through my photographs."

His journey resulted in more than 100 images of women who were being assisted by the ODIHR to hone their leadership skills. The black-and-white photographs on pages 18 thru 24 of this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* are part of a collection that continues to be exhibited at various events.

Mr. Gourlan says that he was deeply impressed with the highly motivated women he met.

"They were making every effort to place gender issues on the agenda by using modest means," he said. "In some places, some of the participants in the gender programmes were men. I noticed that

the younger women — and men — were beginning to understand that gender matters were not simply 'women's issues'. They knew it was all about the need for men to change certain attitudes."



Göran Lenmarker, a member of the Swedish parliament since 1991, was elected **President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly** at its Fifteenth Annual Session, held in Brussels from 3 to 7 July.

“My election came at an interesting time, what with the recent accession of the Republic of Montenegro to the OSCE,” Mr. Lenmarker said. “The welcoming of the 56th participating State into the Organization is the perfect occasion to reinvigorate our dialogue.”

He said he intended to seize the opportunity to promote a wider discussion of OSCE issues beyond its own institutions. “I believe that reaching out to academic and public-interest groups can bring great benefits,” he said.

Mr. Lenmarker noted that the parliamentary input, with its roots in democratic principles, had helped infuse fresh ideas into the OSCE.

The participation of parliamentarians in election-monitoring, “one of the most relevant activities of the OSCE”, would continue to be encouraged under his leadership. “As elected officials, we in the Assembly have a unique expertise in the electoral process, and a particular interest in strengthening democratic processes,” he said.



OSCE/PA

Mr. Lenmarker chairs the Swedish Parliament’s Committee on the Constitution. He was a member of the EU Convention on the future of Europe, and was a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly.

Within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly itself, he has served three terms as Chairman of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, and was Special Representative on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

“Parliamentarians have an important role to play in supporting the OSCE’s conflict-resolution efforts,” he said. “These conflicts are not ‘frozen’: people are suffering and will continue to suffer unless solutions are found. Parliamentary dialogue can complement official negotiations and lay the

groundwork for lasting peace on a democratic footing.”

Mr. Lenmarker paid tribute to his predecessor, U.S. Congressman Alcee Hastings, who will serve as President Emeritus of the Assembly. “I’m fortunate that the ship he left me to steer is in excellent condition, with an experienced and professional Secretariat in Copenhagen and Vienna to support the Assembly’s work.”

Secretariat’s Department of Human Resources starting 7 August. He had served as the Department’s Deputy Director and Chief of Recruitment since November 2002.

Prior to joining the OSCE, Mr. Belyaev was a senior diplomat in the Russian Federation’s foreign service. He served as Ambassador to New Zealand (1995 to 1999) and was assigned to several postings in Africa, including Angola.

High-level positions in Moscow included Deputy Director in the Foreign Ministry’s Personnel Department (1999-2002) and Deputy Secretary-General (1992-1995).

A graduate of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Mr. Belyaev also studied economics and finance, as well as human resource management at the Diplomatic Academy in Moscow.



OSCE/MIKHAIL EVSTAFIEV

Sergei Belyaev has assumed the position of **Director of the OSCE**

Louis F. O’Neill, a U.S. lawyer and specialist in Russian affairs, succeeded William H. Hill as **Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova** on 21 July.



OSCE/CLAUS NEUKIRCH

“Moldova is a fascinating country, and the residents on both banks of the river deserve a better future,” Ambassador O’Neill said. “My team and I will do our best to help them settle the Transdniestrian problem and to strengthen democracy, rule of law, and freedom of the media in Moldova.”

Prior to his appointment, Ambassador O’Neill was on the Policy Planning Staff of the U.S. State Department, where he was responsible for helping develop U.S. long-term policy towards the Russian Federation as well as towards Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

He spent several years in Moscow in the 1990s, where he was closely involved in Russian affairs: as a Fulbright Presidential Scholar at Moscow State University, as a journalist at the *Moscow Times*, and as a team member in a legal reform project sponsored by the Harvard Institute for International Development.

On his return to the United States, he worked for the law firm White & Case in New York and was later appointed an Assistant District Attorney in the Special Prosecutions Bureau of the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office.

As a White House Fellow in 2004-2005, Ambassador O’Neill served as Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, assigned to the Office of Russian Affairs.

A graduate of the Harvard Law School, he also holds a B.A. in Slavic Languages and Literatures and a master’s degree in Russian and East European Studies from Stanford University. He is a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Royal visitors

September was a month of back-to-back royal visits to the OSCE in Vienna, with the former court of the Hapsburgs serving as an appropriate setting. Except for the Hofburg's opulent ceremonial rooms, however, there was little pomp and circumstance surrounding the auspicious events — which suited the unassuming guests just fine.

On 18 September, Prince Albert II of Monaco had a meeting with representatives of the Belgian Chairmanship and members of the OSCE Secretariat to discuss Monaco's co-operation with the Organization.

The Prince was especially interested in exploring ways in which Monaco could link up with the OSCE's efforts in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

He urged that more attention be paid to the needs of child-victims. "Monaco is particularly sensitive to the problems concerning disadvantaged and abused children," Prince Albert said.

Just a little over a week later, on 28 September, Albert II, the King of the Belgians, started his day by taking part

in an OSCE working meeting. From there he proceeded to the Permanent Council, where he listened with great interest to Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht describing some of the crucial security issues that Belgium has been tackling, nine months into its OSCE Chairmanship.

King Albert later greeted OSCE staff members and representatives of participating States at a reception. Addressing the guests at a luncheon in his honour, the King praised the Organization's efforts in the fight against trafficking in human beings. "The peoples of our continent need the OSCE and the fundamental principles and values it represents," the King said.

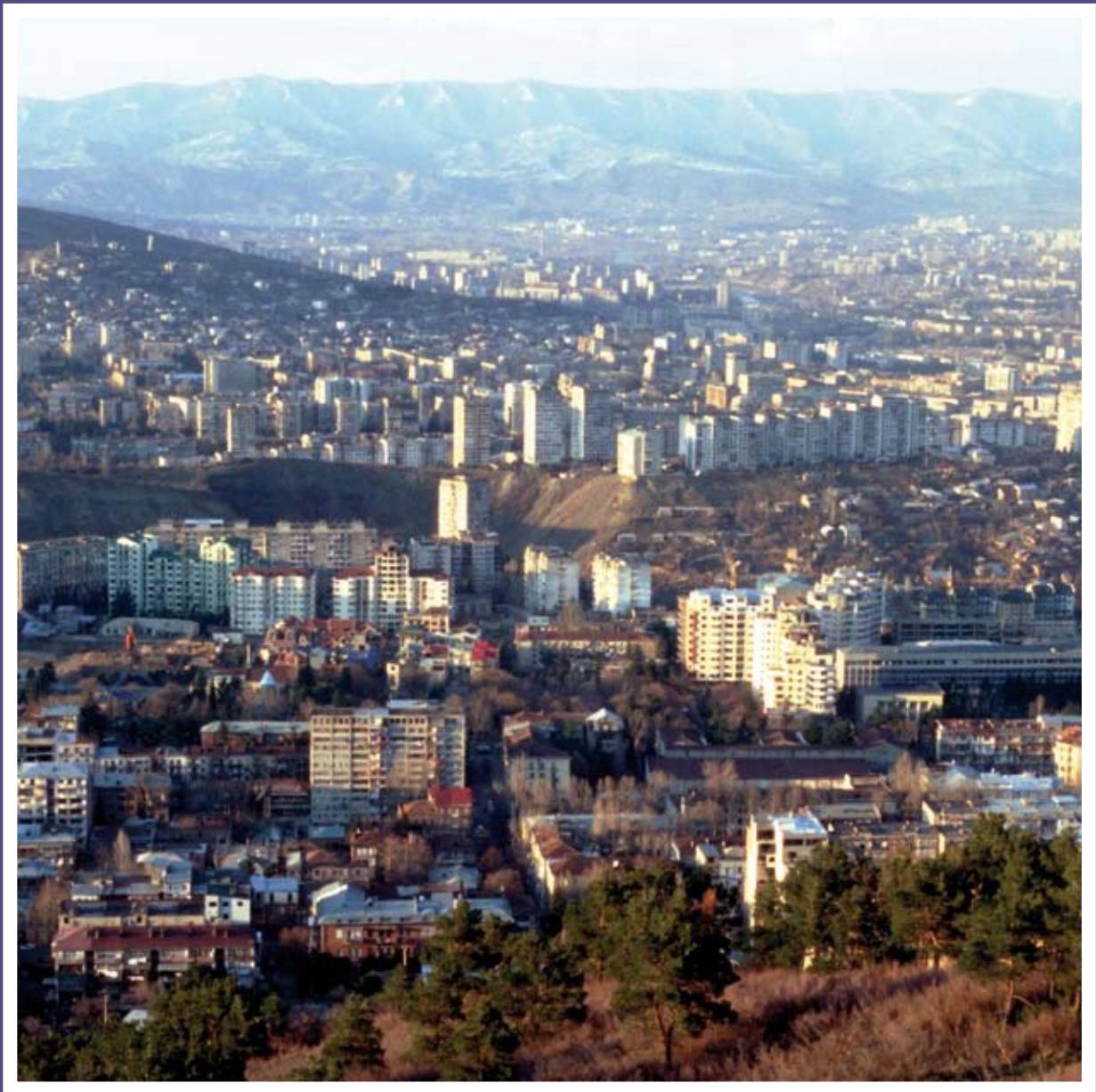


Prince Albert II of Monaco with Belgian Ambassador to the OSCE, Bertrand de Crombrughe (left photo), and with OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut (right photo).

After attending a session of the Permanent Council (right photo), King Albert II of Belgium meets representatives of participating States and OSCE staff members, including Belgians Valérie Crab (left) and Isabelle De Ruyt.



Photos:
OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev



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