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AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

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## I. Introduction

From Albania to Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the Baltic States to Croatia, during this year the OSCE has confirmed its ability to serve as a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in Europe, as called for at the Lisbon Summit in December 1996. Under the chairmanship of Denmark and the effective guidance of Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen, the OSCE has also contributed significantly to the advancement of democracy and the promotion of human rights in the region, thus reinforcing security and stability. Those achievements came about thanks to the growing capability of the Organization to react to crises in a rapid, flexible, multi-faceted and innovative fashion. They were also the fruit of its capacity to interact with other international organizations.

The reporting period (1 November 1996 to 30 November 1997) saw the designation of two eminent Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office who were called upon to take decisive action in crisis situations. Former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González, appointed by the then Chairman-in-Office (C-i-O), Swiss Federal Councillor Flavio Cotti, headed an OSCE delegation to Belgrade, at the height of the dramatic street demonstrations, whose task was to deal with the annulment of the election results in major cities throughout the country. On the basis of his report, which confirmed the victory of the opposition in those cities, the election results were reinstated and calm returned. The Personal Representative also recommended a process towards democracy which now serves as a yardstick for the international community.

The appointment of a high profile Personal Representative of the C-i-O again proved extremely effective in Albania, where the collapse of the pyramid schemes had led to serious political instability and civil disorder. Former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, through intensive discussions with all the parties involved, managed to create a climate favourable to the holding of elections which permitted the restoration of order and the beginning of the reconstruction of the country. In Albania the OSCE proved its ability to quickly mobilize the different institutions and tools it has fashioned over the years. As well as appointing the Personal Representative of the C-i-O, it established a field mission (the Presence), while the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) played an essential role in the conduct and monitoring of the elections with the support of the numerous observers of the Parliamentary Assembly. It also demonstrated that co-ordination between international organizations was of prime importance. The OSCE could not have accomplished what it did without the support of the Multinational Protection Force, authorized by the United Nations Security Council, which provided the secure environment necessary to allow international officials and observers to fulfil their mission. For the first time, the OSCE was given the role of providing a co-ordinating framework for international organizations present in Albania, and this framework was considered a success.

Albania was also the setting for a development vital to the future work of the Organization. For the first time the OSCE (ODIHR, Parliamentary Assembly) spoke with one voice when it assessed the elections it had observed, and it did so in conjunction with the Council of Europe. Indeed, to perpetuate this practice, an agreement was signed between the Chairman-in-Office, on behalf of the ODIHR, and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, which foresees that the ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly would work together in monitoring elections and to issue joint statements on their findings. The ODIHR also expanded its activities in the field of elections by putting more emphasis on long-term

monitoring. Reflecting this trend, the new Director restructured and strengthened the Warsaw Office.

Elections were also very much at the centre of the activities of the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite last-minute tensions, the crucial municipal elections were carried out successfully, under the effective protection of the Stabilization Force (SFOR). Shortly thereafter, the OSCE took on the supervision of the elections to the Assembly of the Republika Srpska. Those actions were supported by the long-term activities of the Mission: democratization, promotion of human rights, inter-ethnic tolerance and the rule of law, and media development. In the meantime, the Personal Representatives of the C-i-O in respect of Article II (confidence and security-building measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Article IV (measures for subregional arms control) of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved notable results. In particular, armaments were reduced by almost 6,600 items in accordance with Article IV.

Other developments in the former Yugoslavia also received a great deal of attention: the OSCE monitored the elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in the light of the recommendations of former Prime Minister González. The C-i-O appointed a Personal Representative to Kosovo, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Max van der Stoel, to explore possibilities for reducing tension there. This was done against the background of Belgrade's refusal to allow the Missions to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina to resume their operations before being allowed itself to participate in the OSCE. Unfortunately, he was not given authorization to travel to the region.

One of the highlights of the year was the holding of elections in Chechnya (Russian Federation), which reflected the free will of those entitled to vote. The elections were organized with the help of the OSCE Assistance Group, which then turned to monitoring the situation of human rights and to humanitarian assistance. Its activities have, unfortunately, been seriously hampered by the lack of security.

1997 saw another essential development for the Organization which also has wider significance for stability in South-Eastern Europe, namely the building up of the Mission to Croatia in view of the expiry of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). The expanded Mission will assist with and monitor the implementation of Croatian legislation and of the agreements and commitments entered into by the Croatian Government on the two-way return of all refugees and displaced persons and on the protection of their rights as well as the protection of persons belonging to national minorities.

The success of this Mission, which will soon become the largest the OSCE has ever established, will no doubt set a further example in the field of co-operation between international organizations, following the success of the exercise in Albania. Indeed, the reinforcement of co-operation with intergovernmental bodies has been remarkable in 1997. Complementing the consultations between Headquarters (in particular, tripartite meetings with the United Nations and the Council of Europe, 2+2 between the Chairmen-in-Office and Secretary Generals of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, address of the Secretary General of the OSCE to the United Nations General Assembly and of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Permanent Council), the exchange of information and co-ordination has been encouraged in the field and functions on a day to day basis in most of the missions (especially Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia and Tajikistan).

The partners for co-operation and the Mediterranean partners for co-operation confirmed during the year their interest in the work of the OSCE. Contacts with non-governmental organizations likewise continued to form an important part of the activities of the OSCE institutions and missions.

Another initiative taken during the year was the establishment of an Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus to assist the authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with their other OSCE commitments. Unfortunately, the start of the Group's activities is being delayed by the protracted negotiation of the technical agreement with the Belarusian authorities.

This year was also marked by a significant expansion of the OSCE's activities in Central Asia, through its Liaison Office, in response to the wishes of the countries of the region which they expressed in particular, when they received the visits of the Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General and the Director of ODIHR. It is to be hoped that the signature of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, the implementation of which is supported by the OSCE mission, will permit the inclusion of that war-torn country in long-term activities.

In general, all OSCE missions, whether large or small, have continued to make important contributions to security and stability in the OSCE area. Despite excellent records of achievement, none of the missions has yet completely fulfilled its mandate and been discontinued. The reduction in staff of the OSCE Presence in Albania after the elections, however, sets a pattern that could be followed regarding other field operations when there is a noticeable improvement.

In the domain of early warning and conflict prevention, the contribution of the High Commissioner on National Minorities was again greatly appreciated by the participating States. The High Commissioner paid numerous follow-up visits to countries where he had identified difficulties and pursued his dialogue with the authorities as well as with representatives of political parties and ethnic groups.

To further enhance the ability of the Organization to detect potential crises and non-compliance with OSCE principles in the field of freedom of expression and free media, the participating States decided to establish a Representative on Freedom of the Media. They also established within the Secretariat the position of a Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Activities in the human and economic dimension of security will, as a consequence, increase.

The Secretary General has, on his side, initiated a process of restructuring the Secretariat with a view to enabling it to keep pace with its increasing workload, enhance its operational capacities and respond to the new expectations of the participating States.

These include security co-operation, a domain where the year was marked by the success of the first Follow-up Conference on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting and the initial review of the Vienna Document 1994.

During 1997, in accordance with the Lisbon Declaration, and in view of the Sixth Ministerial Council in Copenhagen, the participating States focused a large part of their



political consultations in Vienna on intensive work on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the twenty-first century, under the guidance of the C-i-O.

## **II. Activities of the OSCE**

### **1. Political Consultations and Negotiations**

The highlight of the reporting period (November 1996 to November 1997) was the Summit held in Lisbon in December 1996. The Heads of State or Government approved a Summit Declaration and adopted a Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the twenty-first century. A Framework for Arms Control was accepted and the role of the Forum for Security Co-operation was strengthened at the Summit.

The Permanent Council (PC) remains the central body for political consultation and decision-making in the OSCE. It provided political guidance for missions in the field and, responding to rapidly changing realities, took new initiatives enhancing the operational strength of the Organization. During the reporting period the PC adopted 60 decisions.

No Senior Council meetings were held in 1997.

The Security Model Committee pursued the discussions on the Common and Comprehensive Security Model for the twenty-first century. Within this framework two seminars were held in Vienna - one on "Specific Risks and Challenges" and the other on "Regional Security and Co-operation". A significant contribution to the discussion on the Security Model came from the reinforced PC meeting in November.

### **2. Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management, Post-Conflict Rehabilitation**

OSCE long-term missions and other field activities continued to serve as an effective instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. During the reporting period the OSCE increased the number of its field operations by establishing an OSCE Presence in Albania and an Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus. The OSCE field operations carried out their manifold activities - ranging from promoting negotiations between conflicting parties to monitoring respect for human rights and assisting in the establishment of democratic institutions - in accordance with their mandates elaborated by the participating States. Early warnings from long-term missions or the other field activities strengthened the Organization's capability to take appropriate measures designed to ensure that conflicts do not arise or spread.

#### **2.1. OSCE Long-Term Missions**

##### **2.1.1. Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina**

During 1997 there were no changes regarding the missions. They continued to be non-operational as the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) still links their reactivation to the country's participation in the OSCE.

A useful tool in monitoring the situation in the region is provided by an ad hoc working group that continues to meet in Vienna on a regular basis in order to assess the analyses submitted by the OSCE participating States. Information conveyed to the ad hoc working group is transmitted on a weekly basis to the PC.

In February Mr. Max van der Stoel was appointed Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Kosovo with a mandate to examine the situation in the area and explore possibilities of reducing existing tensions and preventing the build-up of new ones. He was also given the task of looking into the possibility of a constructive dialogue on these issues between the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and representatives of the Albanian community in Kosovo. Unfortunately, Mr. van der Stoel has been prevented from carrying out his mandate on site by the refusal of the FRY authorities to grant him an entry visa. In October, the Personal Representative held consultations in Austria with Serbian experts from Belgrade and Albanian experts and politicians from Pristina discussing the increase of tensions in Kosovo, the possibilities of reaching agreement on confidence-building measures and various formulas for the future status of Kosovo.

### **2.1.2. Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje**

The mission has continued to monitor the situation in respect of regional stability, security and co-operation. Disturbances in three neighbouring countries during the past year have ensured that a significant part of the Mission's work has remained focused on the continuing risk of 'spillover', the reason for its inception in 1992.

Nonetheless, the deterioration in the internal climate of inter-ethnic relations have required the Mission to devote a great part of its efforts and resources to the internal dimension. The Mission has maintained dialogue with the Government and with the minorities in seeking to defuse tensions. It has made specific efforts in the economic area, with a Mission member assigned to the task, in order to promote economic growth, crucial to general stability and security. The Mission has sought to bring business and investment opportunities to the attention of potential donors, to improve the range and quality of its economic reporting, and, acting as a catalyst, to work with aid providers and other international organizations and financial institutions in an effort to identify sectors for development.

In order to offer the host State better assistance in developing the democratic structures, the mission intensified its co-operation with the United Nations.

The Mission played a key role in planning and managing the international observation of the nationwide municipal elections that took place at the end of 1996, but which, owing to difficulties in one municipality (Tetovo), were completed only in February 1997. With strong support from embassies of participating States represented locally, the Mission recruited 54 international observers and provided the framework for the participation of 12 observers from the Council of Europe. The observation was an important factor in helping to stabilize the electoral process, which was affected by significant shortcomings in the compiling of voter lists.

The Mission has continued to support the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and has worked actively to raise the profile of OSCE. In May 1997 it organized a second national marathon team relay linking the cities of Skopje and Tetovo, which drew teams from all parts of the community.

### **2.1.3. Mission to Georgia**

In the past year Georgia has been a focal point of OSCE interest. At the end of August the Danish Foreign Minister Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, paid a visit to Tbilisi during which he discussed the work of the Mission with regard to the conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as the prospects of regional co-operation in the Caucasus. At the end of June, the High Commissioner on National Minorities was in Tbilisi in order to familiarize himself with the state of inter-ethnic relations and the situation of the national minorities. The Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly and Special Rapporteur on Abkhazia, Prof. Lamentowicz, has paid two visits to Georgia in connection with the preparation of his report to the Parliamentary Assembly. In April, the Secretary General visited the Mission, held talks with the Georgian Government and opened a Mission's office in Tskhinvali, South Ossetia.

In South Ossetia, the work of the Mission has been facilitated since the summer thanks to the dispatch to the branch office in Tskhinvali of a permanent team of two mission members, who are there on a rotational basis. The danger of renewed ethnic or political violence has receded further, but lawlessness is still rampant and much now depends on close co-operation of the law-enforcement agencies on both sides. With crucial assistance from the UNHCR, which in turn can rely on the support of the Mission, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons has started and should pick up speed in the course of next year, in particular if the question of the return of lost property, or of compensation for it, can be settled in accordance with international standards. The growing involvement of international donor organizations in the economic rehabilitation of the conflict area, encouraged by the Mission, will constitute an important contribution to a political settlement. Negotiations on such a settlement promise to be inevitably long and complicated. The Mission will remind the Parties that it drafted a scheme already three years ago on the autonomy of South Ossetia which could still be a basis for discussion.

Developments in the conflict in Abkhazia were characterized by intensive mediatory efforts on the part of the Russian Federation and intensified bilateral contacts between the political leadership of Georgia and Abkhazia at different levels, e.g. meetings of the President of Georgia with the leader of Abkhazia. The role of the United Nations as leading agency in the negotiation process between the two parties has also been reactivated by convening in Geneva the peace talks to which the OSCE also participates. A new element of these talks is a closer, but not undisputed by the Abkhaz side, involvement of the group "Friends of the Secretary-General" (FoSG) based at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. However, a breakthrough, particularly in the questions of the future status of Abkhazia and of the return of the refugees and internally displaced persons, has not yet been achieved. The OSCE is doing its best to assist the UN in its attempts to promote progress. An intermediate solution for the Gali district would be particularly desirable. The OSCE has appointed an officer to the UN Human Rights Office in Sukhumi, providing a basis which eventually could be strengthened and expanded, also as an example of synergy.

With regard to human rights and democratization in Georgia as a whole, the Mission continues to monitor individual cases of general significance, the progress of legal reforms and the situation in different regions of the country. The implementation of a decree by President Shevardnadze on the protection of human rights and the human rights education of schoolchildren are, at present, focal points of the Mission's attention. In addition, the

question of a law on national minorities and of laws touching on the rights of these minorities, deserve particularly close attention since they also have a bearing on resolution of the conflicts in Georgia and the prevention of future conflicts. The mission aims at closer quadripartite co-operation and co-ordination with ODIHR, the Council of Europe and the UNHCHR in which it could play the role of a permanent agent of liaison and monitoring for human rights projects in Georgia.

#### **2.1.4. Mission to Estonia**

Throughout 1997, the Mission has monitored the issuing of Alien's Passports. The validity of the old Soviet internal passports ended in May 1997, and the process has now reached a stage where the majority of Alien's Passports have been issued, and new applications are coming in at a modest rate only.

The Mission is following the naturalization process, particularly noting the standardization of the language test for the Citizenship Exam.

The Mission continued to concern itself with issues relating to Estonian language training for Russian-speakers and others not of Estonian mother tongue, such training being a major prerequisite for genuine integration, and has helped to channel foreign aid into language training projects. Particularly successful was a summer programme in which Russian-speaking children spent their vacation with Estonian families, an experience the Mission would like to repeat in 1998.

During 1997, the Mission has put increased emphasis on development of and support for the NGO sector. It has helped in organizing seminars, particularly in the north-east, but also in Tallinn. Attention has also been directed to cross-border co-operation in the Lake Peipsi basin area. The Mission assisted in setting up and carrying out the Narva Forum (30 October to 1 November), which discussed general problems of access across the border, environmental questions affecting the area and some individual cases as well.

#### **2.1.5. Mission to Moldova**

1997 saw a major event in the process of an overall settlement of the Trans-Dniestrian problem in Moldova, when, on 8 May in Moscow, the Presidents of Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, together with Trans-Dniestrian leader Igor Smirnov, signed the "Memorandum on the Bases for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Trans-Dniestria" in the presence of the Chairman-in-Office, who also signed. In this document, the two parties to the conflict agreed to continue the establishment of their relations and to proceed immediately to define these relations and the status of Trans-Dniestria, including the division and delegation of competencies. In addition, the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine, as guarantors of an eventual settlement, signed a Joint Statement that excludes the possibility of the Memorandum's being interpreted in such a way as to conflict with OSCE principles or to cast doubt on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. The Chairman-in-Office also signed this Statement.

During the summer, progress was made towards an overall settlement, with the Mission to Moldova and the Russian and Ukrainian mediators taking the lead in drafting a document defining the status of Trans-Dniestria and dividing competencies. This work nourished hopes that another document might be signed at the time of the Summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was held in Chisinau on 23 October; however,

the political conditions did not allow for the finalization of a document. Talks are continuing with the full involvement of the OSCE Mission.

In September, the Mission's agreement with the Joint Control Commission, which oversees the Security Zone separating Trans-Dniestria from the rest of Moldova, was renewed. Also in September, a trainload of non-combat military equipment belonging to the Operational Group of Russian Forces (OGRF), departed Trans-Dniestria, the first such shipment in more than one year. By mid-1997, the strength of the OGRF had been reduced by some 40 per cent to about 3000 men.

The Mission was active in investigating alleged problems in the area of human rights and the human dimension generally. In particular, the Mission worked with both sides on the issue of schooling using the Latin script in Trans-Dniestria, and the opening of the school year 1997-98 was accompanied by less tension than in past.

During the visit of an OSCE Troika delegation in October, the work of the Mission received praise from both sides, and the hope that the OSCE would continue its involvement was generally expressed.

#### **2.1.6. Mission to Latvia**

The mission's main activity throughout 1997 remained the monitoring of the implementation of the 1994 Citizenship Law and the 1995 Law on Non-Citizens. The mission expanded its existing close contacts with key Latvian institutions concerned with naturalization questions, i.e. the Citizenship and Immigration Department, the Naturalization Board and the Human Rights Office. Mission members continued to monitor the conduct of naturalization examinations, which they considered to be administered in a fair manner. At the same time, the mission noted that the pace of naturalization was sluggish and that it was important to understand the reasons for such slowness and to find ways of improving matters.

In the context of the troop withdrawal agreements of 1994, the mission continued to play the role of a third-party facilitator with regard to questions relating to retired military personnel of the Russian Federation who remained in Latvia.

#### **2.1.7. Mission to Tajikistan**

In June 1997 the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan was signed in Moscow. The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan had been an observer of all the inter-Tajik negotiations and became a signatory to the Protocol on the Guarantees of Implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan signed in Tehran in May 1997. As a condition of this protocol, the OSCE, through its Mission in Dushanbe, was given the task of facilitating the implementation of the General Agreement in the areas relating to human rights and the establishment along democratic lines of political and legal institutions and processes. In order to monitor the implementation of the General Agreement and to provide the parties with expert consultants and other good offices, the guarantor States and organizations agreed to establish a Contact Group to be stationed in Dushanbe. The Mission regularly participates in its meetings.

Since the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR) started work in September 1997, the Mission has provided assistance and advice to the CNR in its review of

the amendments to the constitution and changes to laws dealing with political parties, elections and mass media. In October 1997 the first roundtable, under the auspices of the OSCE, was held on the subject of constitutional amendments. Members of the CNR, the Government and various political forces participated. Additional joint CNR-OSCE roundtables are expected to be held in the near future. With the aim of encouraging the development of political processes, the Mission has organized various conferences and seminars on topics such as Peace and Reconciliation Process in Tajikistan; Issues of Consolidation of the Tajik Nation; and Role of Youth in the Future Tajikistan. In an effort to promote awareness of OSCE principles, the Mission has established a discussion group that regularly brings together persons of various political backgrounds and professions for an exchange of ideas on current issues.

Co-operating closely with the Government in implementing its mandate, the Mission has succeeded in establishing contacts with regional and political forces in the country, thereby facilitating dialogue and building confidence. Mission members regularly visit all regions of Tajikistan in order to gain accurate impressions of the political environment throughout the country. Similarly, the Mission fosters contacts between those elements who may play significant roles in Tajikistan's political life.

The Mission continues to maintain strong contact and co-operation with the agencies of the United Nations and the other international organizations in all spheres of its work.

The Mission seeks to promote adherence to human rights norms and principles in a difficult human rights situation. In close co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Mission, working through its field offices, is monitoring the re-integration of returning refugees and internally displaced persons, and is providing legal assistance in order to facilitate rapid resettlement. The field offices, for their part, are promoting the establishment of the rule of law and the restoration of confidence in local institutions, particularly within the judiciary system and law enforcement bodies in the areas of the country most affected by the war.

#### **2.1.8. Mission to Ukraine**

With the significant lowering of tensions in Crimea over the past year, the Mission's focus of activity has shifted to unresolved economic and social problems which continue to bedevil the peninsula. This has largely involved placing fresh emphasis on issues associated with the return to Crimea of over 250,000 formerly deported people, the overwhelming majority of whom are Crimean Tatars. In this effort the Mission has worked closely with the HCNM and international organizations, including the UNDP, the UNHCR and the IOM, so that requests to the donor community for increased contributions to help with the re-integration of the former deportees can be well presented and solidly grounded. An international conference to finalize donor commitments is being planned for early 1998.

The Mission has also actively sought to draw attention to recently eased citizenship regulations which are designed to make possible the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship by the approximately 100,000 Crimean Tatars who are now residing in Crimea but are still citizens of some other former Soviet republic. In this effort the Mission is working closely with the UNHCR to publicize the new citizenship law among the scattered deportee communities on the peninsula.

The legal framework for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea within the Ukrainian State, notably the Crimean Constitution, has not been entirely completed. The Mission, with expert advice from OSCE sources, continues to advise the Ukrainian and Crimean authorities and to provide suggestions for filling in the lacunae.

### **2.1.9. Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Elections. In 1997 the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to build on the experience gained in its supervision of the 1996 national elections. With the holding of the municipal elections, the OSCE's primary goal was to achieve a higher standard of accountability and transparency. The attainment of these goals rested on three major components:

1. The further elaboration of rules and regulations to formalize definitive criteria for establishing voter eligibility as well as the procedures relating to the registration of parties, coalitions and candidates, the polling process and the counting of votes;
2. The registration of all the voters;
3. The full and comprehensive international supervision of voter registration centres and polling stations.

Ultimately, 2.5 million voters were registered to vote during the eight-week drive carried out in early spring inside Bosnia and Herzegovina, at registration centres in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and in Croatia, and by mail throughout the rest of the world. Each voter was allowed to choose either his or her pre-war municipality or a current place of residence, if established criteria could be met. Final voter registers were compiled, on which each voter was assigned to vote at a specific polling station. During the 1997 municipal elections held on 13-14 September, 88 per cent of the registered voters participated. Over 2,300 international supervisors were recruited, trained and deployed to oversee operations at the polling stations and counting centres. During the elections, SFOR played an important role in providing a secure environment and logistical support to the Mission. A total of 142 municipal councils were elected in polls that, in many municipalities, demonstrated a move towards political pluralism and new trends.

Early on, it was recognized that implementation of the results would require close supervision in view of the inter-ethnic tensions that linger in the post-war environment. The OSCE was vested with the authority to ensure that newly elected municipal councils and assemblies were organized and functioning before the final certification of results.

Immediately following the municipal elections and as a result of the constitutional crisis in the Republika Srpska and of the dissolution of its National Assembly, the OSCE was placed at the helm in supervising an unanticipated election. With Decisions Nos. 186 and 190 of 18 and 26 September, the PC tasked the OSCE to supervise the elections for the Republika Srpska National Assembly which took place on 22 - 23 November 1997. Approximately 70 per cent of the electorate within the country cast their ballots in elections, in which 83 members to the National Assembly of Republika Srpska were elected.

Human rights. The Human Rights Branch continued to use its extensive network of Human Rights Officers (HROs) to monitor closely the human rights situation, to report on human rights incidents, and to investigate and intercede in cases of specific human rights violations.



This year HROs have focused particularly on the human rights aspects of cases involving property issues, illegal evictions and the return of displaced persons, the rule of law, illegal detention, and compliance with the Rome Agreement on war crimes arrests, protection of minorities, and freedom of association and assembly. During the 1997 election period, the Human Rights Branch worked closely with the Monitoring Coordination Groups (MCGs) and the Election Results Implementation Commissions (ERICs) in monitoring and facilitating the elections and the implementation of their results.

The Human Rights Branch has also worked closely with the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and other parties (the International Police Task Force, the Stabilization Force, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, etc.), particularly through the Human Rights Coordination Centre (HRCC), on questions of human rights policy and implementation.

Regional stabilization. Implementation of the specific arms control agreements provided for within the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina has made good progress during 1997. The Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures has led to gradually accelerating co-operation from the Parties. Article IV of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Agreement - Agreement on Subregional Arms Control - has demonstrably progressed far better than was expected, and the Parties are attaining balanced and stable force levels at the lowest possible numbers consistent with their defence needs.

The Parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown restraint and moderation during what could have been a deeply contentious process. The climate of more openness, confidence and transparency and progress in the balance of forces in the subregion have been achieved thanks to the efforts and resolve of the representatives of the Parties - a considerable accomplishment for which they deserve due recognition.

The Parties have acknowledged the OSCE's role by requesting the Organization's continued participation through 1998 in key activities for which responsibility was to have been passed to the Parties by the end of 1997. Unresolved difficulties stem primarily from lack of experience and inadequate familiarity with procedure - not from obstructionism or non-compliance. The regional stabilization authorities continue to enjoy close working relationships with the key civil and military implementing agencies.

Democratization. The Democratization Branch, initially part of the Human Rights Branch, was established in November 1996 as a separate unit with the following tasks: promoting the development of civil society; holding of democratic elections to further freedom of expression, association and movement; laying the foundations of representative government; ensuring the gradual achievement of democratic goals throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During 1997, programmes have been conducted in three main areas. Confidence-building where activities were undertaken with the aim of developing dialogue between ethnic groups and across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. Civil society development programmes were carried out with the aim of increasing citizens' participation, strengthening the independent media, promoting a diversified political party environment, and contributing to sustainable work by local non-governmental organizations. Finally, projects geared to democratic institution building focused on assistance to educational institutions and professionals in introducing democratic values and on the promotion of an independent judiciary by providing training for legal professionals and by encouraging laws that meet international human rights

standards. A Legal Aid Program has also been launched, providing a nationwide legal aid service and, at the same time, fostering a strong and democratic legal system.

The Lisbon Summit Document of December 1996 states that the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is expected to contribute to democracy-building through concrete programmes. The Democratization Branch is fulfilling those obligations through the gradual implementation of projects that foster suitable conditions for elections and, in accordance with the Sintra Declaration of May 1997, strengthen the development of democratic institutions. As such, democratization activities contribute to bringing about the necessary environment for the successful implementation of the elections results and the effective functioning of the municipal councils.

Media Development Office. The Media Development Office (MDO) is a separate office within the Democratization Branch. During this year the MDO managed and sponsored five inter-entity programmes in an effort to increase dialogue, interaction, and understanding across entity boundaries. During the last Inter-Entity Journalists' Conference, held in October, over 100 journalists from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina participated to discuss common concerns and problems of their profession. These journalists' conferences provide the only opportunity for media representatives from all parts of the country to meet and share their views. The Media Development Office is also continuing to manage a press distribution programme that delivers copies of newspapers and magazines across inter-entity boundaries to journalists and other influential people.

The Federation Ombudsmen. The present Federation Ombudsmen, Mrs. Branka Raguz, Mrs. Vera Jovanovic and Mr. Esad Muhibic, were appointed, in accordance with the Federation Constitution, by the CSCE (later OSCE) on 31 December 1994 for a term of not less than three years. The Federation Parliament will gain appointment authority only after the passage of a special Ombudsmen's Law, which cannot be adopted earlier than three years after the entry into force of the Constitution (i.e., after 31 May 1997). The OSCE Mission and the Ombudsmen, with the agreement of the Government, have requested technical assistance from the Council of Europe in drafting such a law. The law will include internationally accepted criteria for selection and appointment. The current Ombudsmen have expressed their wish to continue in their positions. Discussions between the OSCE Mission, the Ombudsmen and the Federation on the subject of appointments are continuing.

The first Ombudsmen to hold office enjoy widespread support and respect from the local and international human rights community, the diplomatic community and the general population.

### **2.1.10. Mission to Croatia**

The Mission pursued its task by monitoring the return of refugees and displaced persons on a case-by-case basis and by studying closely the existing property laws. This resulted in a detailed background report on "The Protection of Property Rights in the Republic of Croatia". The report is highly regarded by international and national human rights organizations as well as by the main co-operation partners. In addition, the Mission, in co-operation with the ODIHR, participated in the monitoring of the April 1997 elections for the House of Counties and for the county and municipal assemblies and also the June 1997 presidential elections. The Special Co-ordinator for the OSCE Observer Mission, Senator Paul Simon (U.S.A.), subsequently declared these last elections, which were efficiently conducted, "free but not fair", with candidates able to speak freely, but he described the process leading up to the elections as fundamentally flawed.

In the perspective of the end of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), the Mission was reinforced by Permanent Council Decision No. 176 (26 June 1997), which authorized the gradual increase of personnel up to a ceiling of 250 international staff. The Mission was also authorized to assist with the drafting of Croatian legislation and to monitor implementation not only of these laws but also of agreements and commitments entered into by the Croatian Government on:

- (i) the two-way return of all refugees and displaced persons and the protection of their rights;
- (ii) the protection of persons belonging to national minorities.

Furthermore, the Mission was authorized to make specific recommendations to the Croatian authorities and to refer, where necessary, urgent issues to the Permanent Council.

The Croatian authorities and the Chairman-in-Office agreed that Decision No. 176 would in effect amend the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the Government of Croatia and the OSCE on 29 August 1996, thus leaving the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Croatia with a Mandate consisting of the two Permanent Council Decisions Nos. 112 (18 April 1996) and 176 (26 June 1997), both of them extended until 31 December 1998.

Following the strengthening of the Mission, its headquarters in Zagreb is supported by Co-ordination Centres in Vukovar, Knin, Sisak and Daruvar, and by field offices at 16 other locations, as well as by a Zagreb Area Office. Close co-operation has been established with the European Commission Monitoring Mission (ECMM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who are participating in the co-ordination of field operations and in information-sharing through liaison officers working out of OSCE headquarters. Co-operation is maintained with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Council of Europe, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and also with relevant non-governmental organizations. Particularly close co-operation has been established with the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia in view of its forthcoming withdrawal from the region.

## **2.2. Other OSCE Field Activities**

### **2.2.1. Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference**

The Chairman-in Office's Personal Representative and his team of Field Assistants have continued their monitoring activities of the military situation in the conflict region. These activities have served to underline the primary importance attached by the OSCE as a whole to continued monitoring of the current cease-fire.

The Personal Representative also supported the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference to promote the conflict settlement in the region by initiating a peace plan. He regularly met the authorities of Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as the political and military leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh to promote the settlement on the basis of the Co-Chairmen's proposal. The Personal Representative also supported the High Level Planning Group by preparing the visit of its representatives to the region to update its plan of an OSCE peacekeeping operation, as envisaged at the 1994 Budapest Summit.

### **2.2.2. OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya**

On 27 January, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in Chechnya. The OSCE assisted in the holding and monitoring of these elections. They reflected the free will of those entitled to vote. The second round of the parliamentary elections was held on 15 February. Since then the Assistance Group has focused its attention on other points of its Mandate: mainly the human rights situation, the situation of national minorities' in Chechnya, and questions relating to the humanitarian help and assistance rendered by NGOs operating in Chechnya or outside.

Apart from monitoring the human rights situation, the Group stays in contact with important circles of Chechnya's political and social life. It also monitors the economic situation and the talks on the oil agreement (transport of Azeri oil through Chechnya), which are linked very closely to the political negotiations on Chechnya's future.

An important part of the Group's activity lies in providing assistance for the mine clearing project and with the exhumation and identification of bodies. The Group also supports an orphanage housing 47 children and assists in the provision of equipment for the Children's Surgical Hospital.

The Group, along with foreign representatives (NGOs and others), has had to confront the problem of an exploding crime rate in Chechnya and in the neighbouring republics - crime consisting in kidnappings for ransom and in attacks by bandits. This problem has quickly become a political factor in relations between Grozny and Moscow and has significantly influenced Chechnya's image in the eyes of the international community. A very serious side effect has been a sharp decline in the activity of almost all international NGOs providing humanitarian aid.

The hostage situation is alarming, and the security situation in general is extremely tense. The Assistance Group has, to the best of its ability, tried to help in these cases and expects full co-operation from the Chechen authorities.

### **2.2.3. OSCE Presence in Albania**

Responding to the serious political crisis of February 1997, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office appointed on 4 March former Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, as his Personal Representative to Albania. On 27 March, the Permanent Council established the OSCE Presence to provide Albania with advice and assistance in democratization, the establishment of independent media and the protection of human rights, as well as in election preparation and monitoring. Furthermore, the OSCE was to function as the co-ordinating framework for the work of other international organizations and for facilitating improvements in the protection of human rights and the basic elements of civil society.

Parliamentary elections were held in June and July. The OSCE/ODIHR was instrumental in supporting them with technical assistance and international monitoring. The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, played a key role in ensuring full participation by the political parties and proper conduct of the elections. International observers, led by the OSCE Special Co-ordinator, Mme. Catherine Lalumière, Member of the European Parliament, Sir Russel Johnston, Head of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Delegation and Mr. Javier Rupérez, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, declared these elections “adequate and acceptable” and stressed that the international community expected a “major effort toward national reconciliation after the elections”, without which there would “be no basis for defining the terms of international aid”. These elections, along with a national reconciliation and economic recovery programme introduced by the new coalition Government, opened the way for significant international assistance agreed at international conferences in Rome and Brussels in July and October 1997. The Rome Ministerial Conference on 17 October “welcomed the intention of the OSCE to continue to serve as a flexible co-ordinating framework for international assistance to Albania in concert with the Albanian Government.”

After the completion of the election preparing and monitoring process, the number of international staff in the Presence was reduced. At the same time, the OSCE Presence opened two field offices in October 1997, to support the main office in Tirana. The three offices work in the fields of human rights and rule of law, democratization and civil rights, electoral assistance, media monitoring and institution-building. It is worth mentioning the Administrative Center for the Co-ordination of Assistance and Public Participation (ACCAPP), the OSCE-sponsored office which is co-ordinating foreign and domestic assistance and public participation in the constitutional drafting process. OSCE/ODIHR also sustained a voters’ and civic registration assistance activity, provided technical assistance to the judicial system, assisted in the establishment of national human rights institutions such as an ombudsman, undertook media freedom assessments and completed the first two phases of an NGO network activity.

The Presence worked in close co-ordination with the Albanian authorities, embassies and bilateral assistance missions, other international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the WEU (Multinational Advisory Policy Element) and EU/EC, particularly the Customs Advisory Mission and the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), which undertook its field monitoring in co-ordination with the OSCE.

#### **2.2.4. OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus**

The Permanent Council (PC) several times discussed Belarus' compliance with internationally accepted democratic and constitutional principles and practices and other OSCE commitments such as freedom of the press and freedom of movement.

In order to assess the situation in the country and determine how the OSCE could best assist the Belarusian authorities in making progress towards the establishment of a proper democratic framework, the Chairman-in-Office appointed Ambassador Thorning-Petersen as his Personal Representative. Ambassador Thorning-Petersen visited Belarus from 15 to 18 April 1997 on a fact-finding mission. In his subsequent report to the PC, he recommended the establishment of an OSCE Presence.

Negotiations with representatives of Belarus were held in the summer of 1997 by the Chairman-in-Office and his new Personal Representative, Ambassador Bierring, to discuss the form and the mandate of an OSCE Presence. As a result of these negotiations, the PC decided on 18 September 1997 to establish an OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group. Under its mandate, the Group is to assist the Belarusian authorities in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments. It will also monitor and report on this process. These tasks will be performed in co-operation with the Belarusian authorities and with relevant international organizations.

As discussions between the OSCE and the Belarusian authorities on the technical modalities of the Advisory and Monitoring Group are still going on, the Group has not yet started its work.

#### **2.3. Mission of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office to Belgrade**

In winter 1996, dissatisfaction with the annulment of the results of the November municipal elections led to protest and mounting tensions in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Following an invitation of the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to the OSCE to obtain true information on the elections, the then Chairman-in-Office, on 17 December, appointed former Prime Minister of Spain Mr. Felipe González as his Personal Representative. Mr. González visited Belgrade on 20-21 December and held extensive talks with, *inter alia*, government officials, opposition leaders and media representatives in which he reminded his interlocutors of commitments contained in the Charter of Paris such as democratic elections, free political speech and respect for human rights. The Personal Representative came to the conclusion that the elections reflected the will of the majority of the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and that the authorities must accept and respect the election results. In reaction to these findings and recommendations and to the increasing domestic and international pressure, the Belgrade authorities on 4 February finally agreed to acknowledge the election results in accordance with the conclusions of the González report. Mr. González had also concluded that it was highly desirable to improve as soon as possible the current electoral system and, in general, to take steps towards democratic reform.

## **2.4. OSCE Assistance in the Implementation of Bilateral Agreements**

### **2.4.1. The OSCE Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners**

The Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners continued to meet regularly in 1997 and was able to continue shifting attention away from smaller technical issues to larger questions. In a co-operative atmosphere, the approach was aimed at solving problems in a mutually beneficial manner. The discussion focused on the privatization of flats occupied by military pensioners, the maintenance of memorials in Latvia and Russia, and a number of other social issues relating to military pensioners.

### **2.4.2. The OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners**

The Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners in 1997 continued its review of applications for residence permits by former Russian military personnel. After the bulk of the applications, some 16,000, had been dealt with, a couple of thousand cases with more sensitive backgrounds remained to be reviewed. So far very few of these applications have been refused, and some refusals were later rescinded, also thanks to OSCE intervention on humanitarian grounds. OSCE concerns were also taken into account regarding the assessment of applicants with a security-related background.

The Joint Estonian-Russian Commission for the implementation of the 1994 social guarantees accord was convened only sporadically. The Estonian side eventually agreed to the OSCE Representative's participation when matters of concern to him were to be discussed.

Little progress has been made towards settlement of the problem of illegal aliens, among them former servicemen. A Government appeal to illegal aliens to register has met with meagre response so far. The OSCE Representative has urged a more positive approach towards an amnesty, with assurances of non-prosecution and possible OSCE involvement to help dispel mistrust.

Activities by the Office of the OSCE Representative aimed at bringing about integration and repatriation of divorced and widowed former dependants, abandoned after Russian troop withdrawal, have continued with encouraging results. This kind of social work, carried out in co-operation with the IOM, governments and local authorities, has an important human dimension and is highly appreciated. After completion of a pilot integration course for some 20 women earlier this year, a follow-on six week course for about 40 women was held in November/December 1997. A number of women have been repatriated to Russia with funding by northern countries.

### **2.4.3. The OSCE Representative to the Joint Committee on the Skrunda Radar Station**

During 1997 the Joint Committee under the chairmanship of the OSCE Representative continued to meet on a monthly basis. In April and October the fifth and sixth periodic inspections of the Radar Station took place. It was confirmed that the Agreement is being complied with by both Parties.

According to the Agreement, the functioning period of the Radar Station is to expire on 31 August 1998. Discussions during the summer of 1997 - in the Joint Committee and informally - have led to agreement between the Parties that the OSCE should in principle remain involved in the dismantling phase as well, as at present; this means there would continue to be two periodic inspections per year and regular meetings of the Joint Committee. Preparations for the dismantling operation are now on the agenda of the Joint Committee.



### **3. The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)<sup>(\*)</sup>**

The High Commissioner examined a number of issues relating to national minorities in several OSCE participating States. The matters in question covered a broad range of subjects including difficulties in obtaining citizenship, the prospects of persons belonging to national minorities returning to areas they had previously inhabited, problems relating to education, the use of national minority languages, and the participation of national minorities in the social and political life of the country.

#### **3.1. Croatia**

From 24 to 28 September 1996 the High Commissioner visited Croatia. On 26 and 27 September he chaired a round table on "Practical long-term solutions for stability in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium in the post-UNTAES period", held in Bizovac, near Osijek. The round table brought together more than 40 participants representing the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Parliament, Croatian local authorities, Serbian authorities from the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, and the Serbian minority in Croatia. From 11 to 13 October the High Commissioner chaired another round table which took place in Trakoscan. Participants included representatives of the Government of Croatia and from the region currently under the United Nations Transitional Administration. The Deputy Transitional Administrator and other UNTAES officials attended as observers. The meeting, in which the Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia also took part, had been convened in response to a request made by both delegations at the previous round table in Bizovac.

From 26 to 30 January 1997 the High Commissioner again paid a visit to Croatia. He visited Zagreb and the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Sirmium, which is under the United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAES). From 19 to 21 March the High Commissioner travelled to Knin (former Sector South) accompanied by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, where he met the Government Commissioner and local law-enforcement officials. He was also briefed by representatives of various international organizations on the situation in the area. Discussions focused on the position of members of the Serb community who wished to return to and live in the Krajina and the difficulties they were experiencing (including alleged harassment) and on their claims that they were receiving inadequate protection from the local authorities. From 29 June to 2 July the High Commissioner had meetings in Zagreb and Eastern Slavonia. From 14 to 17 September he again visited Zagreb and travelled to the former Sector South, where he met the Mayor of Knin and local police force commanders. The High Commissioner likewise had meetings with representatives of international organizations in Knin. During these meetings he discussed the two-way return of refugees and displaced persons, the property rights of returnees, and the overall security situation in the region. He also visited an area where the return of Serb families had started. Serb returnees explained to the High Commissioner the serious problems they were facing in their daily life.

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<sup>(\*)</sup> This section also contains activities falling outside of the reporting period but which were not covered by last year's report.

### **3.2. Latvia**

From 7 to 9 October 1996 and from 6 to 7 April 1997 the High Commissioner visited Riga, where he met, among others, the President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. The main purpose of the High Commissioner's visits was to enable him to familiarize himself with the country's naturalization procedures and to learn more about the national language programme designed to increase the knowledge of Latvian. Other subjects of discussion included developments connected with the newly created Consultative Council on Nationalities established by the President and with the work of the National Human Rights Office. From 28 to 30 October the High Commissioner visited Riga once again. On this occasion he outlined his views on the provisions of a new draft State Language Law in Latvia, which had been criticized for being too restrictive and falling short of international standards.

### **3.3. Estonia**

The High Commissioner visited Tallinn from 9 to 11 October 1996 and from 8 to 9 April 1997. He held meetings with the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education. He also had talks with the Speaker of the Riigikogu (Parliament) and several officials from the Ministry of the Interior, the Citizenship and Migration Board, and the Language Board. The main objective of the visits was to enable the High Commissioner to assess developments in naturalization procedures and also the position regarding the production of aliens' passports and their issuance to non-citizens. Other topics of discussion ranged from the efforts being made to increase the effectiveness of the Presidential Round Table on Inter-Ethnic Relations to new language-training programmes aimed at improving the teaching of Estonian to non-Estonians.

From 6 to 7 December 1996 the High Commissioner co-chaired a round table in Lund, Sweden, on "Inter-Ethnic Relations in Estonia". The round table was jointly organized, at the High Commissioner's request, by the Hague-based Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Sweden. Participants included senior representatives from the Estonian Presidential Administration and government ministries together with a number of Members of Parliament as well as researchers and academics from non-governmental organizations and Estonian higher education institutions. Several international experts also attended.

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

The High Commissioner visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 16 to 18 October and from 16 to 18 December 1996. He had talks with the President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education and Physical Culture. He also met leaders of three Albanian political parties: the PDP (which is a member of the governing coalition), the NDP and the PDPA. From 17 to 18 December, the High Commissioner chaired the round table "Building Harmonious Inter-Ethnic Relations", which had been organized, at his request, by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations. Participants in the round table included the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Education and Physical Culture, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Science, the Chairman of the Party of Democratic Prosperity and the Chairman of the Liberal Party. In addition to a number of international representatives, some Members of Parliament, representatives of national minorities (especially of the Albanian minority) and experts from the country's academic community also took part.

From 6 to 8 March the High Commissioner was again in Skopje to review the latest developments in the country, including those with a direct bearing on inter-ethnic relations, in particular demonstrations by Macedonian students and Albanian celebrations in Tetovo. The student demonstrations had taken place in connection with the Law on the Pedagogical Faculty, adopted a short time earlier. Albanian celebrations in Tetovo had been held to mark the victory of the PDPA in local elections there. The High Commissioner expressed his concern about rising inter-ethnic tension and his alarm about manifestations of intolerance during both events, and he welcomed the Government's repeated assurances that it would fully honour its minority rights commitments undertaken within the framework of the OSCE.

From 24 to 27 March the High Commissioner paid a further visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where he returned from 10 to 13 July to have a first hand assessment of events, including those directly pertaining to inter-ethnic relations, in particular the disturbances during demonstrations in the predominantly Albanian town of Gostivar on 9 July, which had led to three deaths. He met the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, officials from the Ministry of the Interior and the leaders of the two political parties representing the Albanian minority in the country, the PDP and PDPA. The authorities also allowed the High Commissioner to meet the Mayor of Gostivar (who was in prison) and the Mayor of Tetovo. After his meetings, the High Commissioner issued a statement in which he expressed his regret at the loss of life and urged all ethnic groups within the State to endeavour to find solutions to inter-ethnic strife by rejecting ethnic hatred and intolerance and by seeking constructive and continuous dialogue, with equal rights for all ethnic groups as the guiding principle. From 28 September to 1 October the High Commissioner paid a follow-up visit.

### **3.5. Hungary**

On 5 November 1996 the High Commissioner visited Budapest, where he had meetings with the Secretary of State in the Prime Minister's Office, the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and several representatives of the Slovak minority community whose situation he wanted to discuss. The chief issues raised included the rights of minorities, provisions for their participation in the national parliament, educational issues, and minority language teaching. On 20 February 1997 the High Commissioner was again in Hungary. The three main topics discussed on this occasion were: parliamentary representation of minorities; television and radio broadcasting time in minority languages, and the freedom of ethnic Slovak parents to choose the languages in which their children were taught at school. From 17 to 18 September 1997 the High Commissioner visited Budapest, where the main topics of discussion included recent developments in bilateral relations between Hungary and the Slovak Republic, specifically with regard to minority issues, the parliamentary representation of minorities in Hungary, the issue of broadcasting time in minority languages on Hungarian television and radio, and the teaching of the Slovak language.

### **3.6. Slovak Republic**

The High Commissioner paid a visit to Bratislava from 11 to 12 November 1996. He had meetings with the President, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Chairman of the Slovak Parliament and the Chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. He also met various members of parliamentary opposition parties and representatives of Hungarian political parties in the Slovak Republic. The main subjects of discussion were the situation of the Hungarian minority in the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Government's current policies in that respect. Various issues raised during the meetings included the rights of minorities, education and provisions for minority languages, implementation of the State Language Law, developments in the field of minority culture and its funding, and issues connected with administrative and local government reform in the country. From 15 to 17 April the High Commissioner again visited Bratislava. Discussions concentrated mainly on educational issues and the question of cultural subsidies from the State budget to minorities. The High Commissioner also inquired about the complementarity of the State Language Law and legislation on the use of minority languages. His visit from 13 to 15 October focused on issues such as the use of minority languages in official communications, the issuing of bilingual school certificates, and the principles that govern the allocation of cultural subsidies. Another important topic discussed by the High Commissioner was the situation of the Slovak minority in Hungary.

### **3.7. Georgia**

From 23 to 25 June the High Commissioner paid a visit to Georgia, where he was received by the President. He also met with the Chairman of Parliament, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Refugees and (Refugee) Settlement and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and National Minorities Issues. The objective of the visit was to gain an understanding of current developments in the field of inter-ethnic relations in the country.

### **3.8. Greece**

On 8 September the High Commissioner paid a visit to Athens, where he had meetings with the Foreign Minister, the Alternate Minister and the Deputy Minister. Discussions focused on the situation in the Balkans. The Commissioner also discussed the particular issue of the religious minority in Thrace and the situation of Greeks living in Turkey.

### **3.9. Kazakstan**

On 8 and 9 December 1996 the High Commissioner chaired a round table on Kazakstan, which was held in Locarno (Switzerland), hosted by the Swiss Government. The round table, entitled "Kazakstan: Building a Multicultural and Multi-ethnic Society on the Eve of the XXI Century", was attended by senior representatives from Kazakstan's Presidential Administration, Parliament, the Cabinet of Ministers, and different ministries and government agencies. Other participants included representatives from local authorities, the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakstan (APK), leaders of regional assemblies of the APK, national cultural centres and public associations, and a number of international experts. Focusing mainly on the issue of inter-ethnic relations in Kazakstan, the round table considered ways of further improving the situation in that area.

From 3 to 5 June the High Commissioner visited Almaty to familiarize himself with the current state of inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan. Among the subjects discussed was the setting up of a research and information centre attached to the APK, which could help carry out surveys and opinion polls among various ethnic groups in Kazakhstan in order to provide a better understanding of attitudes and problems in this sphere. The High Commissioner also discussed the possibility of helping to organize, through the Hague-based Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, training courses on international minority standards for deputy governors with responsibility for inter-ethnic relations in the various regions (*oblasts*) of the country. The High Commissioner met also representatives of different minority groups.

### **3.10. Kyrgyzstan**

From 6 to 8 June the High Commissioner visited Kyrgyzstan, where he met with members of the Government and attended a workshop on inter-ethnic tolerance in the Osh region, an event organized by the Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan with the assistance of the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations and funded by the Netherlands Government. In separate meetings the High Commissioner was given the latest information on the progress of a research and monitoring project in the southern region of the country, which was being conducted by experts from the Peace Research Institute in Bishkek. Among other projects discussed was the idea of holding training courses on minority standards for deputy governors responsible for inter-ethnic relations in their respective districts.

### **3.11. Ukraine**

From 18 to 21 December 1996 the High Commissioner visited Ukraine, where he had meetings in Kiev and Simferopol, to study in greater depth the current state of inter-ethnic relations in the country, particularly in Crimea. In his discussions, he was also able to familiarize himself with the recent efforts aimed at overcoming the remaining difficulties on constitutional matters between Kiev and Simferopol. From 11 to 14 May 1997 the High Commissioner again visited Ukraine to discuss the situation of the Crimean Tatars and, specifically, the rehousing of members of that community and other deported peoples who had been repatriated to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC). He was briefed on the Ukrainian Government's efforts in that area by the Foreign Minister, who also underscored the importance of attracting financial aid from the international community to help solve this problem. Another subject of discussion was the development of Ukraine's relations with neighbouring Romania and Moldova.

### **3.12. Romania**

From 1 to 3 April 1997, the High Commissioner visited Romania, where he met the Prime Minister and members of the new Government, who informed him about the wide-ranging reform programme and, in particular, the integration of minority representatives in the Government. The High Commissioner welcomed this development as a step towards gradually replacing the ethnic principle by the civic principle, a clear sign of a democratic society. He was also briefed about amendments to the Law on Education currently being prepared. Further points of discussion included the teaching of minority languages at universities, possibilities for the return of ethnic Germans who left the country since 1989, restitution of property formerly belonging to religious communities, and educational and social questions specifically relating to the Roma minority.

### **3.13. Seminar on Minority Education**

On 22 and 23 November 1996 the High Commissioner chaired a Seminar on Minority Education organized by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations. Held in Vienna, the seminar was attended by the Ministers of Education of Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and also by government representatives from Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Kazakstan, Latvia, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. Representatives of various national minorities also participated in the meeting. Focusing on The Hague recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities (which had been developed by a group of independent experts), the seminar dealt with the following specific subjects: minority education at the primary and secondary levels, minority education in vocational schools, minority education at the tertiary level, public and private institutions, and curriculum development.

### **3.14. Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Kosovo**

From 8 to 12 October 1997 consultations between the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Kosovo, Mr. Max van der Stoep, Serbian experts from Belgrade and Albanian experts and politicians from Kosovo took place in Dornstein, Austria. The consultations were designed as an informal and confidential forum. Talks with participants from Belgrade and Pristina were held separately.

The discussions covered a wide range of issues, including the rise in tensions in Kosovo and the possibilities of reaching agreement on confidence-building measures that could serve as stepping stones towards the final solution of the Kosovo problem. In addition, various formulas for the future status of Kosovo were examined.

## **4. The Human Dimension: Activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**

1997 was a year of changes and challenges for the ODIHR. A new concept was defined. As a result, new structures were created, involving a significant build-up of personnel resources. For the most part, however, the Office was active mainly in the field. The most serious challenge faced by the ODIHR this year lay in assisting and observing the crucial parliamentary elections held in Albania in June and July under very difficult conditions. The Office also increased its involvement in the promotion of democratic structures and human rights. One of the important achievements in this context was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Uzbekistan in October. In accordance with its mandate relating to the implementation of commitments, the Office supported the review meeting on the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension, which was held in Warsaw in November. At this meeting new ideas were developed aimed at increasing the efficiency of the OSCE's review of the implementation of these commitments.

Thanks to these new developments the Office consolidated its operational capabilities and prepared the ground for more intensive efforts in the coming year. Several important elections will take place in 1998. In addition, there are plans to develop further democracy-building projects in various regions, including the Caucasus and Central Asia.

### **4.1. ODIHR Restructuring**

Following his appointment, the Director presented a concept paper for future ODIHR action which outlined a plan to transform the Office into an operational instrument of the OSCE. That plan, positively received by the Permanent Council, stressed that the ODIHR should set specific priorities within its broad mandate, that it should sharpen its focus on operational activities, and that its staff and structure should be adapted accordingly. These priorities cover three areas: the promotion of elections held in line with OSCE commitments, the promotion of civil society and democratic institutions, and practical involvement in monitoring the implementation of the OSCE's human dimension commitments.

The proposal for a new organizational structure of the ODIHR has to a large degree been implemented. Two sections, Elections and Human Dimension, were established to unify the activities of the existing ODIHR units, and a new deputy director position was created. By dividing administrative and financial duties between two senior staff members, the ODIHR was able to integrate its work more closely with the Chairman-in-Office, the Permanent Council, OSCE institutions and other international actors and advisers. The strengthening of the Office will be facilitated once the host State has provided more adequate office space.

### **4.2. Elections**

As the practice of sending election observer missions to assess elections has developed rapidly in recent years, it has become increasingly obvious that an informed assessment of an election process cannot be made on the basis of election-day observations only. An election process is not a one-day event. As a result of the Budapest Summit in December 1994, the Office's mandate is now more comprehensive and is aimed at achieving

the long-term observation of an entire election process. To make this possible, the ODIHR has therefore redirected its activities. This broader approach was successfully adopted in a number of elections in 1997: in Croatia (13 April); Bulgaria (19 April); Croatia again (15 June); Albania (29 June - 6 July); Bosnia and Herzegovina (13-14 September); Republic of Serbia - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (21 September - 5 October); Republika Srpska - Bosnia and Herzegovina (22-23 November); and Montenegro - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (5-19 October). The ODIHR has also organized a Technical Assessment Mission, a smaller election observation mission, concerned mainly with election management, for the rerun of the presidential election in the Republic of Serbia to be held on 7 December.

The elections in Albania represented a major challenge to the OSCE and the ODIHR, given the circumstances prevailing in the country and the general context of conflict resolution in which the elections took place. The ODIHR undertook a very large Election Observation Mission, in addition to deploying a solid Technical Advisory Group (TAG) charged with advising the Albanian authorities on practical questions pertaining to the management of the elections (voter registration, the Election Law and its implementation, the media, and voter education), and with providing assistance within the mandate of the OSCE Presence in Albania.

All election observation missions conducted in 1997 based their conclusions on the observation of the whole election process, taking into account the various stages of the election cycle, including: the implementation of the law and of election regulations, the effectiveness and impartiality of the pre-election arrangements, the independence of the media, the nature of the campaign and the political environment in the run-up to election day, election day itself, the final vote count, the announcement of the results, and the handling of appeals and complaints. Long-term observers are responsible for viewing the pre-election period and, in this way, for helping the short-term observers to place their election day observations in an informed context.

Election Administration and Observation was the subject of an ODIHR Human Dimension Seminar from 8 to 11 April 1997, which was attended by representatives of 45 participating States as well as of Egypt as a Mediterranean partner, and of four international organizations. The Seminar saw the emergence of a broad consensus regarding the long-term approach and standard methodology adopted by the ODIHR, as documented in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Handbook. Recommendations were made on the need for the ODIHR to receive an invitation to observe elections three months prior to election day, and on encouraging the participating States to contact the ODIHR for assistance in carrying out recommendations. Concerns were also expressed about the need for closer co-operation and co-ordination between representatives of various international organizations present on the spot.

In accordance with its mandate the ODIHR is now able to offer a framework for co-operation, making it possible to include election observers from other international organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, and from relevant non-governmental organizations wishing to participate. The ODIHR offers all international observers a common initial briefing, deployment plan, observer report forms or checklists for statistical analyses, and a forum for debriefing and reporting. The Co-operation Agreement signed on 9 September between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR establishes a framework for joint observation missions and the issuance of a joint



post-election statement. The importance of this politically significant step should be emphasized since from now on the OSCE will be speaking with one voice, and the joint recommendations of the observation missions will be further strengthened through the support of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The Election Observation Missions are part of the ODIHR's regular support to countries in democratic institution-building in line with agreed OSCE commitments. The Missions' final reports, when critical, are not meant to condemn but to offer a balanced assessment of the entire election process, including recommendations for reform. Participating States are encouraged to contact the ODIHR for assistance in implementing the recommendations resulting from an ODIHR election observation and contained in these final reports.

As a result of the restructuring of the ODIHR, the Election Section is now able to offer expanded technical assistance programmes, as has already been done in Albania (Voter Registration Programme) and in Montenegro (Review of the Election Law). A long-term Technical Assistance Strategy is also being developed for Central Asia. These missions can work to provide follow-up to ODIHR recommendations or very-long-term assistance in preparing for elections.

### **4.3. Human Dimension/Democracy Building**

In the Human Dimension/Democracy-Building area the ODIHR has begun the practice of devising formal and integrated work plans. The projects designed within this framework are focused on practical issues. One such example is the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 16 October with the Government of Uzbekistan, which includes a commitment to implement several projects in the field of democratization and human rights. Similar ODIHR projects are envisaged for the other Central Asian States. In addition, proposals have been formulated for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia that reflect the very specific problems faced by these countries in building democracy.

The 1997 activities of the Rule of Law Unit can be summarized under three general headings: expert assessment and review missions, technical assistance projects, and special initiatives. Legal expert assessment and review missions were dispatched to Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Croatia, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan in support of OSCE operations in those countries. Each mission had its own specific mandate and produced a report to support the activities of the Chairman-in-Office and to prepare ODIHR follow-on assistance projects. Technical assistance was also provided to a number of participating States, among them Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, in a variety of fields, including expert analysis and assistance in the drafting of laws, practical management training for constitutional courts, and multi-phase training projects for prison officials. The Unit also co-sponsored a Round Table on Justice and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the United States Institute of Peace and the Council of Europe in an effort to develop a series of recommendations designed to contribute to national reconciliation.

The Human Dimension Unit has provided assistance for the establishment of national human rights protection arrangements (ombudsman institutions) to several participating States. In this regard the ODIHR has established excellent working relations with the Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Georgian, Polish and Albanian authorities and is examining the opportunities for

co-operation with several additional countries. The ODIHR has also been co-sponsoring or attending international/regional consultations in this field in close co-operation with the Council of Europe, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme.

The recommendation of the 1996 OSCE/ODIHR seminar on the constitutional, legal and administrative aspects of freedom of religion, namely that the ODIHR should establish a panel of experts to deal with this issue, was implemented in 1997. The work of the panel was very timely, professional (cf. the experts' individual contributions and joint report), unique (no other intergovernmental organization has been active in a comparably comprehensive way) and committed (work on a voluntary basis). The issue of religious freedom is still very important, as can be seen in its conflict potential within and among a number of participating States.

#### **4.4. Human Dimension education/training**

Human Dimension education/training is one of the core elements of the ODIHR's mandate. In addition to NGO-specific projects, education projects carried out by OSCE missions and the biannual OSCE Human Dimensions Seminars, the ODIHR is implementing human rights education projects with increasing frequency. Regional and subregional workshops were held. Human dimension education during last year included a large number of training activities, such as professionally tailored projects for the media, teachers, NGOs, ombudsmen, legal bodies, refugee or Roma representatives, and others. In many of its education activities the ODIHR co-operates with United Nations Agencies, the Council of Europe, international and local NGOs, and national human rights institutions and institutes. With a special Danish contribution, ODIHR is engaged in a three-phase human rights education programme in the five Central Asian countries.

OSCE/ODIHR conducted the human dimension seminar on the Promotion of Women's participation in Society (14-17 October 1997). The recommendations stemming from that seminar among other things urged the participating States to make more efforts towards the promotion of gender equality at all levels: staffing, activities, projects. The ODIHR plans to hold regional consultations on this issue in Tashkent in 1998.

In 1997 the NGO Unit initiated a series of innovative activities designed to increase co-operation between national and international NGOs as well as to stimulate the development of consultative mechanisms between non-governmental and governmental actors. In the autumn of 1997 two such programmes were initiated in Albania and Uzbekistan. In Albania, the NGO Network met on two occasions in a local Tirana meeting followed by a larger national meeting which included regional NGO representatives. This meeting produced a focused compilation of issues, problems and recommended solutions which were presented to the Albanian Government and to the Working Group established by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dr. Vranitzky. In Uzbekistan the NGO Unit, in co-operation with the National Human Rights Center and the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia began to implement a series of NGO meetings with government officials, the first of its kind ever. Each meeting focuses on specific current issues related to human rights. Simultaneously, the Unit has begun to restructure the NGO database in order to facilitate its application for ODIHR units as well as NGOs and participating States, to increase its outreach activities and to facilitate the incorporation of NGOs into the daily activities of OSCE institutions.

The ODIHR's activities in the area of migration focused on the follow-up to the CIS Migration Conference. The main objective of these activities is to assist the recently admitted OSCE participating States in meeting their OSCE commitments on topics of immediate relevance for issues related to displaced persons. A project was developed to examine the transition of CIS States from the registration permit (*propiska*) system to a registration system that conforms to OSCE commitments and international standards on freedom of movement.

The ODIHR has also co-operated closely with OSCE Long-Term Missions on migration issues. In Georgia, for example, the ODIHR is working with the OSCE Mission, with the Georgian Government, and with relevant international organizations to resolve legal issues concerning the return of persons displaced as a result of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. In 1998, the ODIHR is planning to assist the return of displaced persons by training the competent officials and by developing projects on tolerance-building in the areas of return.

In addition to increased co-operation with OSCE Missions, the ODIHR is also working more closely with interested participating States and other OSCE institutions. Contacts with international organizations have been expanded to combine resources and develop mutually reinforcing programmes. Joint projects are currently underway in Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Central Asian countries.

#### **4.5. Implementation of Human Dimension Commitments**

The ODIHR continues to collect and disseminate facts, figures and opinions about the state of implementation in the human dimension. It continues to exercise an early warning function by informing the Chairman-in-Office of alleged non-implementation of human dimension commitments. The ODIHR is ready to enhance, if so requested, its role as an advisory body to the Permanent Council and the Chairman-in-Office. It also continues to serve as a point of contact for Roma and Sinti issues.

Fulfilling its mandate of assisting in the review of implementation of human dimension commitments, the ODIHR provided material and organizational support to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. This meeting, which took place in Warsaw in November, gave participating States, NGOs and international organizations an opportunity to undertake a thorough review of the implementation of all OSCE commitments in this field. Proposals were made to enhance the review process in the future. It will be up to the Chairman-in-Office and the participating States to agree on a formula allowing for a more efficient and result-oriented review of implementation.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

The biggest challenge for the ODIHR in the coming years will be the translation into practical activities of its tasks in the areas of election assistance and promotion of the human dimension. This implies the need for a more project-oriented approach that will require a new attitude on the part of both the ODIHR and its officials and also the OSCE community at large. The goal is to turn the ODIHR into a flexible human dimension tool, always at the disposal of the OSCE and its participating States and thereby helping to consolidate and reinforce the OSCE's human dimension in all its aspects.

Through a combination of structural, administrative and substantive changes implemented this past year, the ODIHR has begun to transform itself fairly rapidly into a flexible, integrated and fully operational instrument of the OSCE. It is now well prepared to provide participating States with further assistance in consolidating and implementing their human dimension commitments.

## **5. Security Co-operation**

### **5.1. The Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting**

The 7th Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM 97) of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) took place in Vienna from 3 to 5 March 1997. The participation of numerous experts from capitals as well as the discussion of suggestions for improvements to the existing Vienna Document 94 and other FSC agreements demonstrated the important role of this meeting in assessing implementation and discussing the further development of confidence- and security-building measures.

As at 19 November 1997, the following decisions on improvement/further development of existing CSBMs had been taken:

- It was agreed that evaluation visits should be conducted by multinational evaluation teams.
- The provisions regarding *force majeure* as a factor preventing the fulfilment of obligations were elaborated in greater detail.
- A standardized format for Nil reports was devised.

### **5.2. The Code of Conduct**

The first Follow-up Conference on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security was held in Vienna from 22 to 24 September 1997. The participation of high-ranking personnel from capitals underscored the importance both of the document itself and of the first assessment meeting of the Code of Conduct. The success of the conference was based on an extremely intensive information exchange on the progress of implementation and on numerous suggestions on how best to improve implementation of, and further develop, the document. All suggestions will be taken up by the FSC. Initial discussions are taking place regarding the use of a questionnaire on the Code as a basis for a regular information exchange, while a decision on future assessment meetings and a permanent point of contact is expected in the near future.

Delegations suggested that the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) should support the implementation of the Code by organizing and conducting additional "Training for Trainers" seminars. At the request of participating States, in September 1997 the CPC conducted two seminars (Chisinau, Moldova and Kiev, Ukraine) on the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

### **5.3. Global Exchange of Military Information**

The Global Exchange of Military Information was successfully carried out on 30 April 1997, having been preceded by a workshop on automated data exchange between a growing number of contributors.

## **5.4. Other activities**

Other activities of the FSC include:

With a view to the Ottawa Conference on the banning of anti-personal landmines, the FSC adopted a questionnaire to be used as the basis for an annual exchange of information on the subject.

It has decided to conduct a third Seminar on Defence Policies and Military Doctrines in Vienna from 26 to 28 January 1998.

The initial review of the Vienna Document 94 has been finalized. The report of the FSC Chairman on the review will be forwarded to the Copenhagen Ministerial Council.

One monthly meeting of Working Group A was dedicated exclusively to the discussion of implementation issues (based on written and oral reports by the CPC).

To date, participating States have contributed to confidence- and security-building through the following practical measures:

3 airbase visits,

68 evaluation visits,

32 inspections,

2 demonstrations of new types of major weapon and equipment systems,

3 visits to military facilities.

## **6. Other Activities**

### **6.1. Integration of recently admitted participating States**

The OSCE continued to assist the recently admitted participating States (RAPS) through educational and training activities conducted by OSCE institutions, particularly in the fields of democracy-building and the rule of law. In this respect, the Voluntary Fund to foster the integration of recently admitted participating States was again an effective tool of the OSCE. Contributions of some participating States allowed several representative from RAPS to participate in OSCE/ODIHR seminars and other activities.

Special attention was devoted to the Central Asian States. The OSCE increased markedly its efforts to help these countries in their transition to democracy and market reforms by assisting them in the development of democratic structures, human rights and the rule of law so as to maintain stability and prevent conflicts in the region. To determine how best those goals could be met, some of the OSCE's most senior officials, including the Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General and the Director of the ODIHR, paid visits to

Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and met with the presidents of those countries and with other government officials.

The main message conveyed by the OSCE officials to their interlocutors was that Central Asia was very much an integral part of the OSCE community and that these countries' contribution was deeply appreciated. They stressed that the OSCE was ready to assist the Central Asian States in developing their democratic institutions and the human dimension, as well as in strengthening their general stability. The OSCE also offered to stimulate communication and co-operation between the Central Asian member States, since this was an important element in the effort to strengthen regional security. The Central Asian States, for their part, regard the OSCE as an invaluable vehicle for anchoring them to a wider security architecture and as a forum at which to present their security concerns, which include military as well as economic and environmental aspects. The OSCE, though not an economic organization, reaffirmed its readiness to help focus the attention of the international financial institutions on the problems of Central Asia.

OSCE activities in Central Asia are currently shifting towards practically oriented projects. In May, an ODIHR-sponsored course on the philosophical and legal bases of the human rights concept was organized in Tashkent. The course, the first of its kind to be run by an international organization in Uzbekistan, brought together, among others, participants nominated by ministries and government agencies directly involved in the implementation of human rights, human rights NGOs, and human rights scientists. Officials in other Central Asian States have requested that the course be given in their countries also.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Uzbekistan and the ODIHR in October on the implementation in Uzbekistan of a set of projects in the field of democratization and human rights provides another example of this practically oriented approach. Similar projects on concrete issues are envisaged for the other Central Asian States as well.

The OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia (CAO) continued to play an important role in linking the Central Asian participating States more closely with the OSCE. It helped to organize visits by OSCE delegations to the region as well as the organization of seminars, workshops and round tables. It promoted exchanges of information between OSCE institutions and the Central Asian participating States, in addition to establishing and maintaining contacts with local universities, research institutions and NGOs. The CAO also promoted the observance of OSCE principles and commitments, as well as co-operation within the OSCE framework between countries of the region.

Following discussions with Central Asian officials during the high-level OSCE visits in 1997, a concept was developed for the future activities of the Liaison Office. It envisages that in future more narrowly focused projects such as training courses and workshops should be conducted, with special emphasis on issues relating to the human and economic dimensions.

## **6.2. The Economic Dimension**

The Lisbon Summit called for continued efforts in the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic dimension and an adequate development of OSCE activities dealing with security-related economic, social and environmental issues. It tasked the

Permanent Council 'with reviewing the role of the OSCE Secretariat in the economic dimension, and with elaborating a mandate for a co-ordinator within the OSCE Secretariat on OSCE economic and environmental activities, to be submitted not later than the 1997 Ministerial Council'. During the review process, the Department for General Affairs provided the participating States with information and documents on its activities carried out in the economic field. The Co-ordinator's mandate was adopted by Permanent Council Decision No. 194 of 5 November 1997.

The Fifth Meeting of the Economic Forum was held from 11 to 13 June in Prague. The theme was 'Market Economy and the Rule of Law'. The discussion focused on two principal aspects of the rule of law in economic matters, namely, its relationship to economic development and its implications for security and stability. The participants included, in addition to representatives of the OSCE participating States, representatives of the partners for co-operation, the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, NGOs, and the academic community. In the framework of the Forum, the Chairman-in-Office hosted a working lunch with the Heads of Delegation of International Organizations, which was addressed by the Secretary General. The Forum also agreed the list of seminars for 1997/98 and set 3-5 June 1998 as the date of the Sixth Meeting.

A seminar was held in Tashkent from 30 October to 1 November 1996 on the subject of 'Promoting Sustainable Development in the Aral Sea Region'. The seminar was intended to follow up last year's Tashkent/Urgench seminar on 'Rehabilitating the Environment' and was designed to promote an economic and legal framework for the environmentally sustainable development of the Aral Sea and to mobilize international action to that end.

A seminar was also held in Almaty, Kazakstan, from 22 to 24 October 1997 on the theme of 'Stable and Transparent Economic Legislation for Economic and Social Transition'. The seminar focused on the legislative needs of the transition economies and included sessions on the role of legislation in economic relations, the legislative needs of these economies in specific areas, and the institutional arrangements which should be put in place.

## **6.3. Press and Public Information**

### **6.3.1. Press**

During 1997 the OSCE figured prominently in the international press. The Spokesperson not only maintained regular contacts with the media but also stepped up her activities in the field.

The report of Mr. Felipe González, the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), generated a great deal of media attention in January and February.

From March to July the crisis in Albania and the work of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, kept the OSCE constantly in the press.

Municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in September, and parliamentary elections in Republika Srpska in November, both supervised by the OSCE, also received prominent press coverage. A great deal of attention was also given to the observation by the OSCE of the presidential elections in Serbia and Montenegro.

The Spokesperson worked closely with the Danish Chairmanship in helping to keep the press and the general public aware of the Organization's activities.

For the most part, especially as regards the OSCE's work in Albania, the media coverage of OSCE operations was positive.

### **6.3.2. Public Information**

The Organization heightened its emphasis on public information. Circulation of the monthly *OSCE Newsletter* rose sharply from 1,500 to 5,500. Greater quantity was matched by improved quality. The Newsletter now includes pictures. The format has been standardized and the number of articles has gone up. The ODIHR section of the Newsletter has been expanded to compensate for the fact that the publication of the ODIHR Bulletin has been discontinued.

At the request of some participating States the Secretariat examined the possibility and financial implications of publishing the OSCE Newsletter in all six official OSCE languages. A proposal was included in the 1998 Unified Budget draft.

New features, like an interactive map and a section on "the OSCE in the web of interlocking institutions", have been added to the OSCE website, which has been accessed by over 20,000 people in the past year, an indication that the Organization's activities are arousing much interest. A marked increase in requests for public information and visits to the OSCE by student and special interest groups points to a similar trend.

A depository libraries system was introduced which, when fully implemented, will mean that there is at least one library in every OSCE participating State that will have a significant collection of major CSCE/OSCE conference documents and public information material.

In 1997, the focus of the Prague Office shifted from conference services to public information. The Prague Office handles many projects including technical maintenance of the OSCE website, most mailing lists, the creation of a CD-ROM, and the updating of the contacts database.

A "Briefing Paper" series was launched. The first paper is on Article IV of Annex 1-B to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and on sub-regional arms control. Other publications will follow in 1998.

The Department for General Affairs started to update the OSCE Handbook with a view to issuing a new version in the spring of 1998.

Steps were taken to improve links and information exchange with other international organizations and institutions.

### **6.3.3. OSCE Online**

In 1997 the Secretariat looked at new ways of improving access to information by the participating States and between the OSCE and other international institutions and organizations. It proposed the creation of a restricted on-line service called "OSCE Online", which would have a core section of information for participating States, a human dimension



section, an economic dimension section and a so-called operations matrix designed to provide information on the mandates and operations of the OSCE and of institutions and organizations with which the Organization has operational links.

### **III. The Parliamentary Assembly**

The Parliamentary Assembly (PA), set up as one of the original OSCE institutions in the Charter of Paris, has continued to build and expand its role within the Organization. The International Secretariat of the OSCE PA, located in Copenhagen, works closely with the OSCE Secretary General and the other OSCE institutions. The President of the Assembly has become a regular participant in the meetings of the Troika, in addition to delivering the Assembly's statements at OSCE summit and ministerial meetings. More than 300 OSCE parliamentarians met together at their annual session in Warsaw in July to debate OSCE issues and activities. The OSCE's parliamentary dimension has contributed greatly to enhance support for the Organization in the national parliaments, in political circles and within the governments of the participating States.

#### **1. Annual Session**

In keeping with established tradition, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, along with the OSCE Secretary General and the Heads of various OSCE institutions and OSCE missions, addressed the Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Warsaw. The session's central theme was an evaluation of the implementation of OSCE commitments by the OSCE signatory States. The Assembly adopted a declaration reflecting its views on implementation in the areas of political and security affairs, economic and environmental issues, and the human dimension.

#### **2. Annual Briefing in Vienna**

The Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations of the OSCE PA met in Vienna in January, where it was briefed by the Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General and Heads of OSCE institutions. These annual briefings ensure that the Assembly and its leadership are provided with timely information about OSCE activities and that a regular dialogue between the governmental and parliamentary sides of the OSCE takes place.

The Parliamentary Assembly, in co-operation with the Austrian Parliament, organized a three-day seminar on the eve of the Standing Committee meeting for more than 40 parliamentarians from Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus. The seminar concentrated on presentations by experts and discussions on parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. Participants in the seminar also attended the annual briefing and the meeting of the Standing Committee.

#### **3. Election Observation**

The Parliamentary Assembly has continued to make an important contribution to OSCE election monitoring efforts. The Assembly dispatched large delegations of parliamentarians to monitor elections in Croatia, Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska. Parliamentarians, as elected public officials, lend great weight to the visibility and credibility of OSCE election projects, in addition to providing experienced leadership for the short-term OSCE observer teams. At the Troika Meeting in Copenhagen in September, the Chairman-in-Office and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly signed a co-operation agreement between the Assembly and the ODIHR aimed at further increasing

the co-operative and complementary working relationship between these two important OSCE institutions.

#### **4. Presidential Visits and Missions**

The President and other officers of the Parliamentary Assembly have undertaken an increasing number of official visits and missions within the OSCE area in an effort to lend their support to the ongoing work of the Organization, particularly where Long-Term Missions are deployed. In 1997, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly visited OSCE missions in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Uzbekistan, among others, and also led a high-level OSCE parliamentary delegation to Turkey to discuss, in particular, the human rights situation in that country. The President also made official visits to the parliaments of Poland and the Russian Federation, while one of the Assembly's Vice-Presidents, in response to a joint request by the Parliament and the President of Georgia, undertook a mission to Georgia and Abkhazia to report, as Special Rapporteur, on the situation there.

#### **5. Seminars, Conferences and Meetings**

Members and Representatives of the Assembly participated in meetings organized by other OSCE institutions, including the Economic Forum in Prague, the election monitoring seminar organized by the ODIHR in Warsaw, and the Human Dimension Review Meeting. In addition, the Parliamentary Assembly substantially increased its own activities through the organization of a seminar on security, democracy and human rights in Tashkent in September and a conference on subregional economic co-operation in Monaco in October. The Tashkent seminar, organized in conjunction with an Expanded Bureau Meeting of the OSCE PA, was attended by more than 50 parliamentarians from Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus along with an equal number of parliamentarians from other OSCE States. A decision was taken to hold a similar meeting next year in Tbilisi. The conference in Monaco was undertaken in co-operation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and was attended by more than 200 parliamentarians and officials from throughout the OSCE area. The conference was addressed by the Secretary General of the OSCE and a high-level representative of the Chairman-in-Office, as well as by leading figures from various regional economic organizations.

#### **6. Other Activities**

The Parliamentary Assembly awarded its Second Annual Prize for Journalism and Democracy to the French-based organization, *Reporters Sans Frontières*, which supports the work of journalists trying to provide international news coverage in areas where freedom of the press is restricted or severely limited.

The international intern program carried out in the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Copenhagen continued to expand, making available research internships to more than 15 applicants from various OSCE countries. The OSCE PA's intern team has assumed primary responsibility for the briefing papers handed out to short-term OSCE election observers. The internships are for a duration of six-months and may be extended for up to one year.

## **IV. Relations with International Organizations and Institutions**

The OSCE considerably expanded its co-operation with other international organizations. In various meetings with senior officials and experts, held at Headquarters or in the field, opportunities for enhanced co-ordination and co-operation on the basis of comparative advantages were identified in order that duplication and waste of resources be avoided and synergies and added value produced.

The working relationship between the OSCE and the United Nations has been further strengthened through increased contacts at high level and closer co-ordination and co-operation in the field.

On 12 December 1996 the Secretary General addressed the 51st Session of the United Nations General Assembly during the traditional debate on the resolution concerning the co-operation between the United Nations and the OSCE. He informed the General Assembly about the OSCE's various activities and held meetings with the Secretary General and other high-ranking United Nations officials to discuss the interaction between the UN and the OSCE in different fields.

Closer co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations as well as other international organizations received additional impetus from the annual High-Level Tripartite meeting, held this year on 24 January in Geneva, which was attended by representatives of United Nations institutions, the Council of Europe, the OSCE as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The participants examined ways of achieving operational synergies, including sharing of information by electronic means, in areas where they are all active, such as the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The follow-up to the International Conference on Refugees and Displaced Persons in the CIS, which was held in May 1996 in Geneva, was also discussed.

Co-operation in the field between the OSCE and the United Nations increased markedly. Contacts between OSCE missions and United Nations representatives in countries such as Georgia, Moldova or Tajikistan were stepped up. In some areas this has led to a de facto division of labour, while the autonomy in decision-making and the specific nature of each organization has been safeguarded. The assignment of an OSCE mission member to the United Nations Human Rights Office in Sukhumi, Abkhazia, Georgia, who is working in close collaboration with the Director of this Office and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Georgia, has proved to be an innovative and effective way of consolidating co-operation in the field.

Closer working links between the OSCE and the United Nations were evidenced during the 52nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was addressed, according to practice, by the OSCE Secretary General. The resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 November 1997 on "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe" underlines the OSCE's contribution to security in Europe, welcomes the improvement of co-operation and co-ordination between the two organizations as well as the progress in common work in the field, and requests the

Secretary General of the United Nations to explore with the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General of the OSCE possibilities for further enhancement of this interaction.

The OSCE further improved its close working relationship with the Council of Europe also thanks to various meetings at Headquarters and at expert level.

In addition to the aforementioned High-Level Tripartite meeting, a “2+2 meeting” between the Chairmen-in-Office and the Secretary Generals of the OSCE and the Council of Europe was held on 4 February in Oslo. The meeting assessed the state of co-operation between the two organizations, looked at ways of improving the exchange of information, examined the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly as regards the two organizations’ plans for the future, and discussed projects relating to the free media.

On 10 March, in Strasbourg, an OSCE-Council of Europe gathering of experts from different countries and members of permanent delegations from Strasbourg and Vienna, exchanged views and experiences on the two organizations’ various mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of commitments.

The extensive co-operation and consultation mechanisms between the OSCE and the Council of Europe included visits by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the OSCE on 13 February and 23 October. In his addresses to the Permanent Council, he supplied information about the second Council of Europe Summit, the ongoing accession process of some countries to the Council and the various programmes the Council was running in regions where the OSCE was also active, such as Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Caucasus. Underlining the need for continued, pragmatic, action-oriented and mutually reinforcing co-operation between the Council and the OSCE, based on independence and complementarity, he especially urged the pooling of the respective strengths of the organizations for better conflict prevention.

Within the framework of the regular High-Level Tripartite meetings between the Council of Europe, the OSCE and United Nations, a target-oriented-meeting chaired by the OSCE and devoted to the Caucasus was held on 4 November in Vienna. Representatives from the Council of Europe and various United Nations agencies attended the meeting along with officials from the ICRC, the IOM and the European Commission. Working within an informal and pragmatic framework, the participants were able to learn about one another’s activities in the region and assess prospects for enhancing co-operation in the field.

Co-operation and co-ordination between the OSCE and other international organizations were greatly furthered by two meetings organized by the OSCE on the occasion of the Secretary General’s visits to Georgia in April and Uzbekistan in July. These field meetings proved very useful, since - in some cases for the first time - they brought together international organizations and NGOs active in the two countries and gave them an opportunity to learn about each other and to exchange experience and information. Areas of overlapping activities were successfully identified and ways of achieving complementarity and avoiding duplication found.

Scope for further co-operation in the field was also pinpointed at the June Meeting of Heads of Missions in Vienna, to which the OSCE invited international organizations acting in countries where OSCE missions are based.

Since the exchange of information is vital to co-ordination, two meetings of information technology experts from all the major international organizations acting in the OSCE area were held on 23 January and 3 October. The purpose of these meetings was to draft and submit to the High-Level Tripartite meeting specific proposals on facilitating the flow of information through the use of electronic means of communication.

A seminar on "Co-operation Among International Organizations and Institutions: Experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina" was held in Portorož, Slovenia, on 29 and 30 September. This seminar, organized at the suggestion of the Department for General Affairs of the OSCE Secretariat, provided an opportunity for the international community to compare notes on the various commitments in Bosnia and Herzegovina with regard to security, economic affairs, human rights and other fields, also in order to learn lessons for the future. The seminar was attended by eminent representatives of 30 participating States, including high representatives from the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska. Representatives from Japan, Republic of Korea, Egypt, Israel and a large number of international organizations and institutions involved in Bosnia and Herzegovina also participated in the seminar.

## **V. Relations with Partners for Co-operation**

The OSCE continued to work with its partners for co-operation, Japan and Republic of Korea, and its Mediterranean partners for co-operation, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia.

Japan and the Republic of Korea made a significant input to financing the municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Japan also seconded supervisors to these elections and personnel to the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the Lisbon Summit in December 1996, a Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE-Troika and the Mediterranean partners for co-operation was held to evaluate the state of co-operation between them, as well as to discuss the Security Model and exchange views on other issues of common interest.

From 3 to 5 September another Mediterranean seminar was held in Cairo, Egypt. The topic was "The Security Model for the twenty-first century: Implications for the Mediterranean basin". In addition to representatives from 33 of the OSCE's participating States, the seminar was attended by representatives from Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia. Among the international organizations taking part were the Arab League and the Organization for African Unity.

The seminar reaffirmed the principle of the indivisibility of security in the OSCE region and the Mediterranean area. Many participants stressed the need to include a substantial Mediterranean component in the future OSCE Security Model. It was recognized that the OSCE could play an important role in the Mediterranean area, in particular by assisting in the promotion of the rule of law, the development of confidence-building measures in relations between the Mediterranean partners for co-operation, and by devising co-operative strategies for dealing with common concerns such as terrorism.

A further important contribution to better dialogue and co-operation between the OSCE and its Mediterranean partners for co-operation was made by the regular meetings of the Mediterranean Contact Group in Vienna. At these meetings high-level OSCE officials gave briefings on the OSCE's various areas of endeavour, such as promoting confidence-building measures, protecting national minorities, fostering democracy and the rule of law, and implementing measures for conflict prevention, crisis management and the settlement of disputes. Together with representatives of the Mediterranean partners, they discussed possibilities for applying the OSCE's experience and principles in the Mediterranean region.

## **VI. Contacts with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

The Organization is considering ways of further intensifying its co-operation with Non-Governmental Organizations.

In addition to the Secretariat, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) played an essential role in liaising with NGOs. Its NGO Unit initiated a series of activities aimed at enhancing co-operation between NGOs and improving their contacts with government authorities. In Albania the NGO unit was involved in setting up a network for local NGOs, and in Uzbekistan it began to organize, together with the Uzbek National Human Rights Centre and the OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia, a series of NGO meetings on human rights issues. These meetings are the first of their kind ever to be held in Uzbekistan. NGOs also participated actively in the biannual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting organized by the ODIHR. The meeting gave them an opportunity to exchange views on the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension.

Contacts with NGOs continued to form an important part of the activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, who, during his preventive diplomacy missions to OSCE States, focused on the role of NGOs as possible sources of information.

OSCE missions maintained contacts with NGOs working in areas relevant to their particular mandates. In many cases constructive working relations were established. Information exchanges and co-ordinating activities have proved to be effective means of achieving quick results in areas of common interest.

In line with previous suggestions, some NGOs were invited to take part in the annual Mission Member Training Seminar and to brief future and serving mission members on their work in various host countries of OSCE missions.

In June, several NGOs participated in the Heads of Mission Meeting in Vienna, at which an overview of their activities was presented and new avenues of co-operation explored. At the Heads of Mission Meeting in Warsaw in November, the ODIHR suggested that one member, to be responsible for human dimension aspects and for contacts with the ODIHR and with NGOs, should be appointed in each Mission.



## **VII. Administration and Finance**

### **1. Finance**

#### **1.1. Budgeting**

The Budget for 1997 was approved by the Permanent Council on 19 December 1996 (PC.DEC/150). It was initially established at the level of ATS 309.5 million. Shortly afterwards the Permanent Council approved a budget for OSCE tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina amounting to ATS 248.9 million (PC.DEC/152). The 1997 Budget was further increased to include additional funds for the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (ATS 1.3 million), for the Election Observation activities of the ODIHR (ATS 3.1 million), and to include provisions for the "Concept for ODIHR action" (ATS 2.4 million).

On 18 September the Permanent Council approved a budget of ATS 24.2 million for the OSCE activities in Albania, covering the period from 22 April to 31 December, and on 20 November a revised budget of ATS 79.5 million for the OSCE mission to Croatia.

The total budget for 1997 now (as at 27 November) stands at ATS 656.4 million, representing an increase over 1996 of ATS 120.5 million, or 22.49 per cent. This growth is mainly due to increased activities of ODIHR, the enlargement of the Mission to Croatia and the new activities in Albania.

#### **1.2. Accounting**

The accounts for 1996 were submitted to the External Auditors on 26 March 1997. The report of the External Auditors included an unconditional audit opinion certifying that:

- The financial statements present fairly the financial position of the OSCE as at 31 December 1996, and the results of the operations then ended;
- They were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
- Transactions were in accordance with the approved financial procedures and legislative authority.

The audited financial statements for 1996 were submitted to the Delegations of the participating States on 5 June 1997 and were accepted by the Permanent Council on 10 July 1997 (PC.DEC/180).

#### **1.3. Cash Management**

The cash flow of the OSCE continued to grow during 1997 due to the increase of activities financed from Voluntary Contributions. The average total monthly cash balances were over 20 percent higher than those of the previous year. Throughout the year short-term cash deposits were made in order to maximize the investment income, which amounted to ATS 8.2 million as at 21 November 1997.

A Contingency Fund amounting to ATS 30 million has been created, in accordance with Permanent Council Decision No. 182 of 17 July 1997. The purpose of the Fund is to enable the OSCE to act immediately after the adoption by the Permanent Council of a decision on a new OSCE activity and to cover the corresponding financial requirements prior to the approval of the relevant supplementary budget, thus further strengthening the OSCE cash resources.

## **2. Personnel**

### **2.1. Staff Regulations**

The Staff Regulations were approved by the Permanent Council and entered into force on 1 January 1997. The corresponding Staff Rules were issued by the Secretary General.

### **2.2. Internal Procedures**

A transitional recruitment roster has been developed, pending completion of an integrated personnel management and recruitment system.

### **2.3. Recruitment**

Compared to 1996, recruitment activity doubled owing to the need to fill positions established in the Secretariat to support the Mission to Croatia and the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, direct recruitment (rather than secondment) was authorized for several key posts in these two Missions. As of November 1997, forty-three (43) vacancy notices had been issued for fixed-term posts as compared to twenty-four (24) vacancy notices issued in 1996, in addition to considerable recruitment activity for short-term staff.

## **3. Information Technology Section**

### **3.1. The Secretariat**

In addition to support for all software and computer equipment (approx. 500 major items) and its procurement as well as assistance in ongoing evaluations and trials of new technologies (e.g., WinNT and Office 97), critical upgrades were made to the information-systems infrastructure within the Secretariat in 1997, as follows:

- The entire network cabling at Kärntner Ring was upgraded to provide for current work volumes and estimated mid-term growth;
- A central, secure facility for housing all Kärntner Ring's servers and network equipment was installed (air-conditioning is to be provided in 1998);
- Internet e-mail capability was provided for all users on the network (some technical issues are still outstanding);
- The capacity of the data link between the Kärntner Ring and the Hofburg premises was increased (to be completed early in 1998).

### **3.2. The Missions**

In 1997 the IT Section continued to provide basic general support and assistance for a number of specific IT-related projects.

- It assisted the Mission Support Section (MSS) with the definition of the scope, tendering and selection of their BPR (Business Process Re-engineering) project.
- It provided general computer advice and assistance (e.g., measures to control computer viruses), including help with the procurement process for computer-related equipment and software.
- It finalized the Internet connectivity to all missions.
- It issued, subsequently recalled, upgraded and reissued (50 per cent complete by the end of 1997) 580 notebook computers.
- It gave assistance with/advice about the on-going support of all major computer components.

### **3.3. Strategic IT Plan**

A conceptual model of the OSCE-wide Information Systems Strategy has been developed and widely circulated to the OSCE users for comment. With the appointment of the new Chief of the ITS, work on the strategy will be expanded and relevant proposals will be presented in 1998.

### **3.4. Statistics Summary for 1997**

1997 was marked by rapid growth in the acquisition and putting in service of computer-related equipment and in the resultant requirement for support.

- The number of personal computers supported in the Secretariat and DCS increased by 27 per cent (following a growth of 26 per cent during 1996).
- The number of servers in operation increased by 71 per cent (following a growth of 75 per cent during 1996).
- The amount of data maintained on the servers increased by over 100 per cent.
- The number of Internet e-mails increased almost exponentially, from 120 messages per day to 1,000 per day.
- The number of personal computers in use in the missions more than doubled to approximately 1,200.

## **4. Legal Matters**

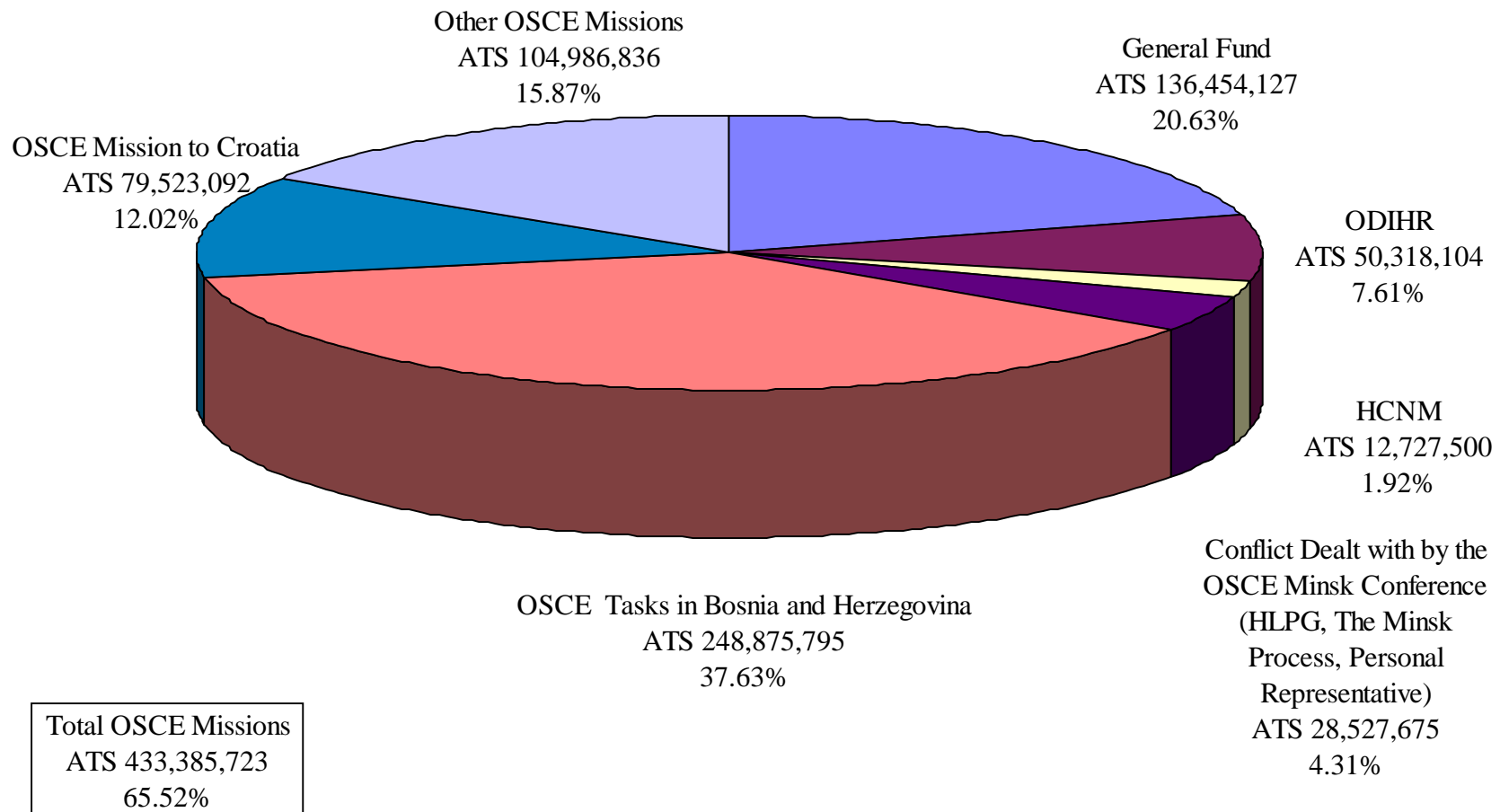
Legal advice and assistance was provided on a continuing basis to Institutions and missions. The main areas concerned included the negotiation and conclusion of contracts and also international agreements; privileges and immunities in host countries of OSCE institutions as well as matters relating to the status and activities of missions and their staff; personnel matters, the implementation of the Staff Regulations and Rules, including the

development of draft Terms of Reference for the Panel of Adjudicators; and claims and insurance matters.

## **5. Other Administrative Tasks**

The Department of Administration has continued to provide a number of services also to OSCE missions, such as mail service, sufficient supplies to maintain daily operations, travel and accommodation services for Secretariat and mission staff and proper staff registration with the Austrian authorities, recognition of the treatment to which the staff are entitled. In addition, the DAB tackled the increasingly difficult allocation of relatively scarce office space to the incumbents of additional posts and to augmentation staff for missions. With the growth of the Organization, record keeping and maintenance of files in the archives section have expanded significantly. For example, as compared to 1995, facsimile traffic, despite increased use of electronic mail, has risen by roughly 75 per cent.

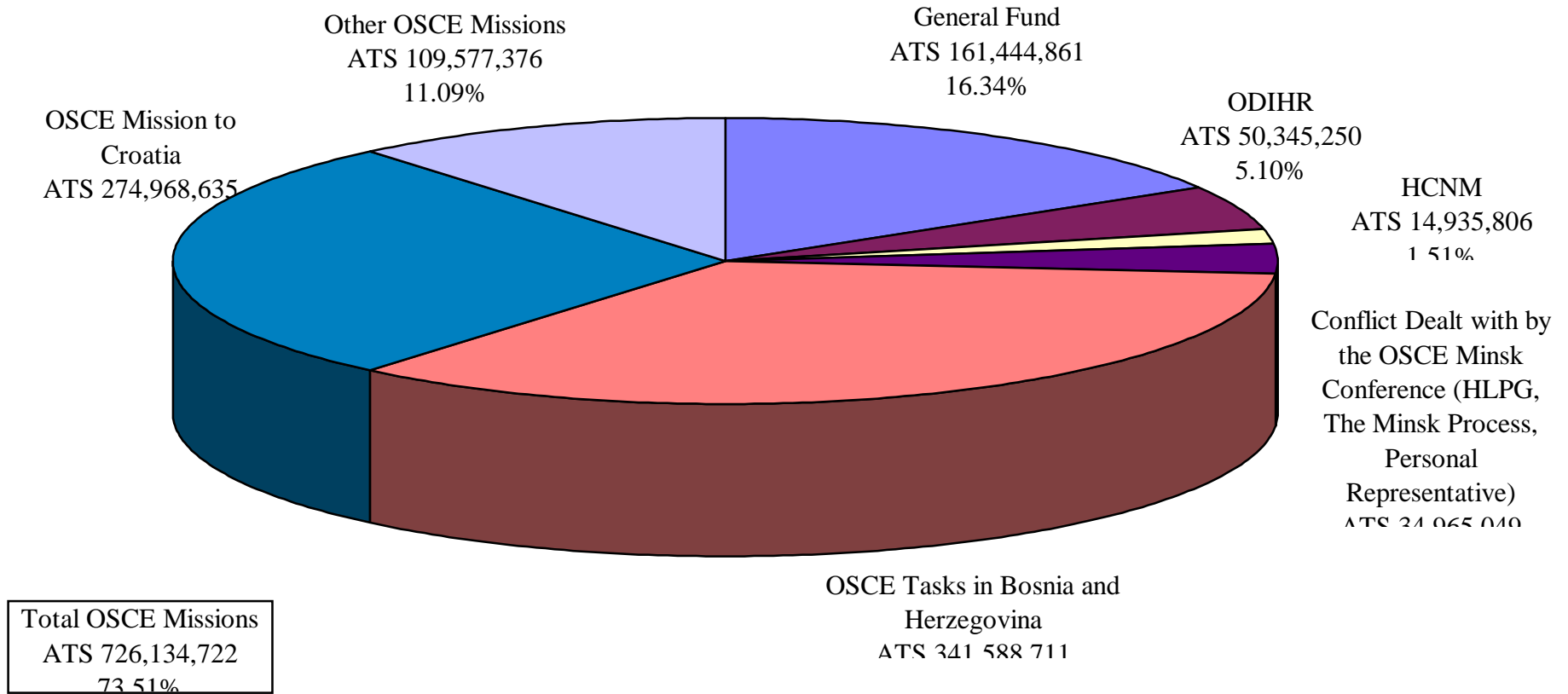
**OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET 1997  
AS PER 21 NOVEMBER 1997  
ATS 661,413,129**



## OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET 1997 AS PER 21 NOVEMBER 1997

<b><u>Fund</u></b>	<b>ATS</b>	<b>Per Cent</b>
<b>Main Programme</b>		
<b><u>The General Fund</u></b>	<b>136,454,127</b>	<b>20.63</b>
Secretary General and Department for General Affairs	26,884,255	4.06
Conflict Prevention Activities	14,800,717	2.24
Activities Relating to Military Aspects of Security	5,482,661	0.83
Conference Services in Vienna	50,146,879	7.58
Conference Services in Prague	4,580,200	0.69
Common Services in Vienna	31,439,915	4.75
Common Services in Prague	3,119,500	0.47
<b><u>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</u></b>	<b>50,318,104</b>	<b>7.61</b>
<b><u>High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)</u></b>	<b>12,727,500</b>	<b>1.92</b>
<b><u>Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference</u></b>	<b>28,527,675</b>	<b>4.31</b>
High Level Planning Group	2,199,911	0.33
The Minsk Process	17,762,000	2.69
Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office	8,565,764	1.30
<b><u>OSCE Missions</u></b>	<b>433,385,723</b>	<b>65.52</b>
OSCE Tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	248,875,795	37.63
OSCE Mission to Croatia	79,523,092	12.02
Other OSCE Missions	104,986,836	15.87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>661,413,129</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSALS 1998**  
**AS PER 30 NOVEMBER 1997**  
**(not yet approved)**  
**ATS 987,825,688**



**OSCE UNIFIED BUDGET PROPOSALS 1998**  
**AS PER 30 NOVEMBER 1997**  
(not yet approved)

<u>Fund</u>	ATS	Per Cent
Main Programme		
<b><u>The General Fund</u></b>	<b>161,444,861</b>	<b>16.34</b>
Secretary General and Department for General Affairs	41,991,042	4.25
Conflict Prevention Activities	16,946,000	1.72
Activities Relating to Military Aspects of Security	8,523,550	0.86
Management of Resources	1,936,667	0.20
Conference Services in Vienna	49,574,777	5.02
Conference Services in Prague	2,349,200	0.24
Common Services in Vienna	36,259,625	3.67
Common Services in Prague	3,864,000	0.39
<b><u>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)</u></b>	<b>50,345,250</b>	<b>5.10</b>
<b><u>High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)</u></b>	<b>14,935,806</b>	<b>1.51</b>
<b><u>Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference</u></b>	<b>34,965,049</b>	<b>3.54</b>
High Level Planning Group	2,680,421	0.27
The Minsk Process	23,020,217	2.33
Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office	9,264,411	0.94
<b><u>OSCE Missions</u></b>	<b>726,134,722</b>	<b>73.51</b>
OSCE Tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina	341,588,711	34.58
OSCE Mission to Croatia	274,968,635	27.84
Other OSCE Missions	109,577,376	11.09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>987,825,688</b>	<b>100.00</b>