

Issue Number 1/2010

OSCE

2010 Chairmanship:  
Kazakhstan sets its sights high

MAGA

Nagorno-Karabakh:  
Interview with Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk

ZINE

Ukraine:  
Eliminating dangerous legacies of the past



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## OSCE Chairmanship 2010: Kazakhstan

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Forum for Security Co-operation (Vienna)

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(Vienna)

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(Warsaw)

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OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

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## Message from the Chairperson of the Permanent Council

As a country straddling East and West and the first Central Asian participating State to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE, Kazakhstan has a unique opportunity to bridge divides and affirm the cohesiveness of this prestigious Organization, a platform for dialogue that brings together 56 States located on three continents.

Work in 2010 has begun at full speed. The start of the Chairmanship was preceded by the timely decision of the 56 participating States to approve the OSCE Unified Budget for 2010.

An important achievement in the first term of our Chairmanship has been the appointment of Dunja Mijatović as new OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. She assumed the post on 11 March, succeeding Miklós Haraszti, whose term ended on 10 March. We are pleased to have been able to assure a smooth transition. For the first time, a woman is heading an OSCE institution. This confirms a rising trend in the representation of women in higher management positions at the OSCE.

Promoting the resolution of protracted conflicts is a priority of our Chairmanship. The Chairperson-in-Office's first regional trip was to the South Caucasus from 15 to 17 February, where he discussed the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders and paid tribute to the confidence-building activities of his Personal Representative Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk. This issue of the *OSCE Magazine* features the work of Ambassador Kasprzyk and his team, including an interview with him.

On 3 March the second of six cycles of the OSCE project to remove the toxic rocket propellant mélange from Ukraine was successfully completed. The *Magazine* describes this project and also an OSCE needs assessment in Crimea on removing explosive remnants of war.

In Vienna, we are bringing forward the Corfu discussions on fundamental questions of European security. From 12 to 13 February my colleagues joined me at an ambassadorial retreat to kick off the elaboration of concrete proposals. Let me here salute my predecessor as Chairperson of the Permanent Council and colleague Ambassador Mara Marinaki, who in this *Magazine* eloquently describes the exciting process of launching the Corfu discussions last year. Kazakhstan is pleased to announce that it will carry on the tradition initiated by the Greek Chairmanship on the island of Corfu last June by inviting foreign ministers to an informal meeting in Almaty. This meeting will be a major event in preparation of the proposed OSCE summit this year.

*Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov*  
March 2010

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ON THE COVER: Musicians of the Kurmangazy State Academic Orchestra of Kazakhstan play traditional melodies on the *kobyz*, an ancient bowed string instrument, at a gala concert inaugurating the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship on 13 January 2010. (OSCE/Vera Subkus)



# Kazakh Chairmanship sets sights high

by Sonya Yee

Few OSCE Chairmanships have been ushered in with quite as much fanfare — and scrutiny — as Kazakhstan's this year. The first Central Asian and post-Soviet State to lead the Organization, Kazakhstan has been the focus of heightened attention since the participating States decided in Madrid in 2007 to give the Chairmanship to the country.

**S**peaking at the first session of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 14 January, the 2010 Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, said Kazakhstan's Chairmanship "demonstrated the desire of the OSCE itself to really bring the countries to the east and the west of Vienna closer together and to modernize and strengthen the Organization in order to adapt it to the present-day realities."

2010 also marks the 20th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and of the Copenhagen Document — groundbreaking texts marking the end of the Cold War and outlining the human rights commitments agreed by the States — and the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the OSCE's founding document. Combine all this with the fact that the OSCE participating States are engaged in a

challenging, high-level dialogue to address the future of European security, and it's clear that 2010 will not be business as usual at the OSCE.

## **AIMING FOR A SUMMIT**

The Kazakh Chairmanship is meeting the challenges head on, with a far-reaching programme to tackle regional security questions and the ambitious aim of holding a summit this year, which would be the first in 11 years, since the Istanbul Summit in 1999.

"Now is the time when the leaders of the OSCE participating States should demonstrate their political will and focus on solutions to the difficult challenges facing our nations. A summit would not only give a powerful impetus to adapting the OSCE to modern challenges and threats, but would also increase the confidence and respect enjoyed by the Organization itself among our peoples," said Kazakhstan's

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev speaks welcoming words at a gala concert inaugurating the Kazakh Chairmanship in the Vienna Hofburg on 13 January 2010. More than 100 of Kazakhstan's best instrumentalists and singers performed traditional melodies, as well as classical music in the 90-minute concert. (OSCE/Vera Subkus)



President Nursultan Nazarbayev in a video address to the Permanent Council.

Consensus is required for a summit to take place. In December the OSCE foreign ministers noted the summit proposal with interest, and tasked the Permanent Council to engage in exploratory consultations. That is happening now in Vienna and between capitals. And, with tongue firmly in cheek, the Chairmanship has even gone so far as to draw up a short Kazakh-Russian-English phrasebook featuring as one of its key phrases: *Summitti otkizeik! — Let's have a summit!*

#### SETTING THE AGENDA

In the meantime Kazakhstan — under the guiding principles of “Trust, Tradition, Transparency and Tolerance” — is moving ahead with its priorities for the year, including working to resolve protracted conflicts, addressing terrorism and promoting tolerance, as well as reconstruction of Afghanistan and co-operation on transport.

Taking the torch from the 2009 Greek OSCE Chairmanship, the Kazakh Chairmanship has also pledged to advance the Corfu Process, the OSCE-anchored dialogue on the future of European security. Following up on the Athens Ministerial Council Declaration on the OSCE Corfu Process and the accompanying Decision tasking the 2010 Chairmanship to take the discussions forward, delegations in Vienna have begun identifying areas of possible agreement and developing proposals capable of attaining consensus.

Minister Saudabayev followed his inaugural address in Vienna with a trip to Brussels to discuss the Chairmanship's priorities with European Union (EU) officials. In Brussels he also met North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

#### ENGAGING WITH AFGHANISTAN

On 28 January he attended the London Conference on Afghanistan, where he informed the international community about plans for enhancing engagement with the country, which borders three OSCE Central Asian States. He later endorsed the Communiqué of the London Conference, which underlines the international community's continuing commitment to Afghanistan, highlights the importance of Afghan leadership and recognizes the critical role of regional organizations, including the OSCE.

“Today the concept of European security goes far beyond the borders of the European continent and encompasses the vast expanse of Eurasia. Accordingly, we intend to focus particular attention on Afghanistan,” said Minister Saudabayev in his Permanent Council address. “Helping the Afghan people to transform their war-torn country into a peaceful, productive and self-sustained society, based on democratic principles and values, is an important task for the OSCE and the whole international community.”

He emphasized that the OSCE Chairmanship would play an active role in implementing and co-sponsoring projects to strengthen Afghanistan's borders with Central Asian countries, to develop cross-border co-operation and to enhance law enforcement activities.

In February Minister Saudabayev travelled to Washington, where he addressed the United States (U.S.) Helsinki Commission and met U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and then on to New York, where he addressed the United Nations (UN) Security Council and met UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “I strongly believe that a better use of the OSCE's capabilities would help the UN and its Security Council to more effectively prevent

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev (centre), High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek (right) and Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Janez Lenarčič (far right) at the first session of the Permanent Council, 14 January 2010. (OSCE/Franz Morgenbesser)



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1 After addressing the United Nations Security Council in New York, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev (left) meets United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 5 February 2010. (UN Photo/Mark Garten)

2 OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev (left) greets Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in Brussels, 26 January 2010. (The Council of the European Union)

3 OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, meets U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington, 4 February 2010. (OSCE/Virginie Coulloudon)

security threats and respond to them," Saudabayev said.

#### FIELD VISIT

In his first trip to a region with OSCE field operations, the Chairperson-in-Office then visited Azerbaijan and Armenia, where he met with the respective Presidents, Foreign Ministers, other officials and representatives of political parties to discuss the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the work of the field presences there. "Kazakhstan is the first ex-Soviet State to chair the OSCE, and we will seek to fully utilize the shared history and similar mentality of our peoples, as well as the trust and good relations between our countries' leaders to achieve possible progress in resolving the protracted conflicts in a peaceful way. This is one of the top priorities of our Chairmanship," he stated.

Minister Saudabayev completed his trip to the South Caucasus with meetings in Tbilisi, where he discussed both OSCE activities on the ground and the Geneva Discussions that aim to sustain stability in the areas affected by the armed conflict in August 2008.

He was accompanied by Ambassador Bolat Nurgaliyev, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Protracted Conflicts, who has also engaged in a tireless

schedule of shuttle diplomacy since the start of the year.

As Co-Chair of the Geneva Discussions with the UN and EU representatives, Ambassador Nurgaliyev held talks in Sukhumi, Tskhinvali, Tbilisi and Moscow ahead of the last round of the Geneva Discussions on 28 January. In February, he met Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities in Chisinau and Tiraspol, prior to an informal meeting in Vienna on 2 March in the "5+2" format, which includes the sides, the mediators from the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE, as well as observers from the U.S. and the EU.

Other Chairmanship priorities for 2010 include countering illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, energy security, combating trafficking in human beings — with a particular focus on trafficking in children —, advancing the participation of women in public and political life and supporting the rule of law, in particular with respect to judicial independence, the prevention of hate crimes, freedom of movement and the situation of Roma and Sinti.

#### CONFERENCE CALL

Minister Saudabayev also announced a number of high-level meetings scheduled for this year, which will focus on Chairmanship priorities in all three dimensions, including a



Ambassador Bolat Nurgaliyev is Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Protracted Conflicts. He was Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation from 2007 to 2009 and has served as Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States, Canada and Mexico. Here, he speaks at a news conference following the ninth round of the Geneva Discussions, 28 January 2010. (OSCE/Virginie Coulloudon)

High-Level OSCE Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination to be held in Astana on 29 and 30 June.

“Given our extremely positive experience in securing inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony in our own country, we intend to make tolerance and intercultural dialogue within the OSCE area a major priority of our Chairmanship,” he said.

Continuing the practice initiated by Greece last year with the informal ministerial meeting on Corfu in June, Minister Saudabayev has invited the OSCE foreign ministers to an

informal meeting in Almaty this summer.

“In the Alatau mountains, rising 3,000 metres above sea level and among the flowering alpine meadows, we could in the spirit of Corfu continue the open and free exchange of views on the most pressing problems in the OSCE’s area of responsibility and ideally reach a consensus on an agenda and timeframe for the summit,” he said.

Sonya Yee is Press and Public Information Officer at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna.

## Corfu discussions on European security enter a new stage

Following up on the Athens Decision on furthering the Corfu Process, which tasks the Kazakh Chairmanship “to continue the informal, regular and open dialogue... in order to extend the areas of agreement and contribute to consensus building,” delegations in Vienna have switched gears from the brainstorming that characterized the meetings of the autumn to developing concrete proposals under the eight topics the Decision names:

- implementation of all OSCE norms, principles and commitments;
- role of the OSCE in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- role of the arms control and confidence- and security-building regimes in building trust, in the evolving security environment;

- transnational and multidimensional threats and challenges;
- economic and environmental challenges;
- human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as democracy and the rule of law;
- enhancing the OSCE’s effectiveness;
- interaction with other organizations and institutions, on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security.

The cross-dimensional approach to security and general questions of Euro-Atlantic security have been identified as additional areas of discussion. The Athens Decision provides that in the framework of the Corfu Process, participating States may raise any issue they consider pertinent. The goal is to submit an interim report to the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC)/ Permanent Council (PC) by June.



2009 GREEK CHAIRMANSHIP

## *“Difficult and frustrating, but in the end, a marvellous journey”: That was 2009*

by Ambassador Mara Marinaki

**Hofburg, 17 December 2009.** At the last meeting of the Permanent Council under the Greek Chairmanship, Ambassador Marinaki and her Deputy, Dionyssios Kyvetos (right), along with Herbert Salber, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (extreme left) and Hans-Michael Plut, Deputy Director of Conference Services, pay tribute to the work of the Greek Chairmanship team and Conference Services. (OSCE/ Jonny Perfect)

I had a strong hint of what was to come when I landed in Madrid in late November 2007 to take part in the 15th Meeting of the Ministerial Council, the culmination of the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE. Still, the decision taken by the 56 participating States, which we had been half-expecting, jolted me into reality. It had now come to pass: Greece would assume the Chairmanship’s seat in 2009, a year earlier than anticipated, to be succeeded by Kazakhstan in 2010 and Lithuania in 2011.

Usually, a country assuming the Chairmanship has a lead time of more than two years in which to put the intricate practical arrangements in place. For us it would be less than a

year — a challenge of Olympian proportions! This breaking news also meant that when our Finnish colleagues would take over the helm in four weeks’ time, we would be catapulted into the OSCE Troika. I had only just arrived that September to take up my new post as Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE and had a lot of catching up to do — not least to be sufficiently fluent in often cryptic “OSCE-speak”.

Our immediate tasks were to form and train a Chairmanship team and find new suitable premises for a delegation that was about to triple in size. I was reassured by the thought that the most recent Greek EU presidency in 2003,



the Athens Olympics in 2004 and our active presence on the international stage had honed our expertise — although we would find out soon enough that there was nothing quite like leading the OSCE.

Colleagues who were willing and able to rise to the challenge were urgently summoned from various posts abroad to join the “old guard” in Vienna (although the Mission’s longest-serving member had been here less than two years). Six months and endless Vienna-Athens conference calls and meetings later, my team of 13 diplomats and 13 administrative staff was in place, and we could boast of new and refurbished quarters in the heart of the city, a quick seven-minute walk to the Hofburg.

The Athens-based Chairmanship Task Force was entrusted to veteran diplomat Ambassador Nikos Kalantzianos. He had two crucial tasks: transmitting the essence of the Greeks’ OSCE agenda and the current issues-at-stake to the incoming Chairperson-in-Office, and orchestrating the work flow between Athens and Vienna. It did not take long before his team, too, was complete.

**Fast forward to 15 January 2009, the Hofburg:** Fifteen days after the Finns handed the torch over to us, I was pleased to be able to introduce the OSCE’s new Chairperson-in-Office, Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, to my colleagues at the Permanent Council. It was a particularly delicate period in which to be launching a Chairmanship: the feeling of trust and confidence among participating States was at an all-time low in the aftermath of the Georgian crisis of August 2008. As Minister Bakoyannis laid out her vision for the OSCE under her stewardship, I doubt if anyone sitting

around the table could have predicted that her committing Greece to serve as an “honest broker” would soon lead to a renewed security dialogue that would serve as the lynchpin of our Chairmanship and a hallmark of the Organization.

Dora Bakoyannis credits the Finnish Chairmanship for sparking the idea that led to her groundbreaking initiative. “The free-flowing and spirited discussion on pan-European security that took place over a foreign ministers’ lunch was truly one of the highlights of the 16th Ministerial Council Meeting,” she recalls. “As the future Chairperson-in-Office, I announced on the spot to my colleagues that Greece was ready to convene a high-level meeting to reinvigorate the dialogue on European security and examine its future.”

On 18 February 2009, just six weeks into our Chairmanship, we launched an initial, exploratory phase by holding a joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation, in close co-operation with the latter’s French Chairmanship. This was in keeping with the efforts of participating States to bring greater synergy between the work of these two OSCE main decision-making bodies. A series of stimulating retreats and seminars followed, both within and outside the Organization, capped by a particularly successful Annual Security Review Conference in June.

While the pace of discussions seemed excruciatingly slow and it was difficult to tell where they were leading us, the “renewed dialogue” initiative — still without a catchy name — was gathering steam. Before we knew it, everybody was on board and we were ready to start brainstorming on the next steps. Then, on a visit to

Acropolis Museum, 1 December 2009. At the end of the first day of the 17th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, foreign ministers gather for a photo opportunity following an official dinner and a special tour of the newly opened museum. (OSCE/George Kontarinis)



Hofburg, 17 December 2009. Ambassador Mara Marinaki hands over a "conflict prevention cushion" to her successor, the new Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov of Kazakhstan. (OSCE/Jonny Perfect)



"I find it amusing that the cushion is still in service," said Dutch Ambassador Justus de Visser from his home in Belgium when he heard about the informal ritual at the Permanent Council. "I had handed it over to the incoming Chairperson of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Ivo Petrov of Bulgaria, at the end of the Netherlands Chairmanship in 2003. It all started when I happened to mention to an American professor who was visiting our delegation that many confidential matters were told to me on the couch where she was seated, and that I sometimes felt like Sigmund Freud. It inspired her to embroider the cushion."

In December 2007, Belgian Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrughe told his successor, Spanish Ambassador Carlos Sánchez de Boado, in his light-hearted parting remarks: "I solemnly transfer this cushion to you — the one destined to decorate the "conflict-prevention couch" in your office. As the legend goes, the couch with the cushion has the power to turn visitors away from litigious intentions and make them work for peace, hence for the OSCE and hence for the Chairmanship. The cushion is also good as a shield against the kicks, punches and blows."

Brussels for the EU-OSCE Ministerial Meeting in March, Minister Bakoyannis managed to surprise even her closest associates when she formally announced Greece's intention to host an informal OSCE ministerial meeting in early summer on the island of Corfu.

#### **SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION**

On 28 June, OSCE history was made when the Ionian island rolled out the welcome mat for high-level representatives of the 56 participating States, including 51 foreign ministers — an exceptionally high turnout for the first-ever informal meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council. Although the gathering was meant to be casual and relaxed, our guests immediately immersed themselves in a frank and serious exchange of views that must have been reminiscent of the spirit of co-operation among their predecessors 35 years ago in Helsinki.

It was exhilarating and uplifting to be an active eyewitness to this demonstration of political will among participating States. For the first time in what seemed like a long, long time, they acknowledged that there was a genuine need for a fresh dialogue. Furthermore, they were willing to come together to define its content and the proper forum for it, and to envisage the dialogue's place in the broader framework of security organizations in the OSCE area. Thus was coined the term "Corfu Process", which quickly seeped into our consciousness and political parlance.

Exhaustive, exhausting and highly rewarding is the only way I can describe the series of ten "Corfu Process meetings" that took place at the Hofburg from September to November. Over less than 12 weeks, my fellow ambassadors and I, with the help of invited academic experts and heads of OSCE institutions, identified the most pressing common challenges faced by participating States and generated ideas on how the OSCE could be empowered to better serve the security needs of the 21st century. By revisiting the Organization's milestone documents, we were able to refresh our memories about their completeness and their continued relevance. And we were able to look into how we could implement this remarkably rich *acquis* more effectively.

In early December, exuding bold but cautious confidence, we docked at our final port of call — Athens — for the ultimate challenge: the Ministerial Council meeting, this time welcomed by our new Chairman-in-Office, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister George Papandreou and by his Special Envoy, Alternate Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas.

#### **ROBUST MESSAGE**

Athens proved to be the second defining moment of 2009 for our Chairmanship and the Organization. It was in the Greek capital that the Corfu Process was fully, formally and collectively endorsed by the 56 Foreign Ministers — not as an end in itself but as an OSCE-anchored vehicle to repair and refresh our relations. By adopting an ambitious and wide-reaching "Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE Corfu Process" (see page 12) and by complementing it with the "Decision on Furthering the Corfu Process", our political masters sent an unmistakably robust message, backed by concrete political guidelines, that they were determined to re-establish the concept of comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security as the compass for inter- and intra-state relations.

No singular achievement under our Chairmanship makes me prouder and leaves me with a truer sense of accomplishment than this

political consensus reached in Athens. I can honestly say that we spared no effort in finding common ground by listening to every point of view and trying to decipher our partners' slightest expression of unease. I am personally grateful to everyone who supported the Greek Chairmanship's proposals right from the outset and who encouraged us to "keep calm and carry on", as we all toiled together in the Preparatory Committee till the wee hours of the morning for almost a week. Most of all, I would like to tip my hat to those who expressed understanding of what was at stake and, instead of being merely dismissive, went out of their way to explain why they could not agree with the majority.

I think most of my colleagues would agree with me when I say that we all left Athens with a better appreciation of the positive ramifications of our intense dialogue on our relations and on the Organization's work. This sense of reforged partnership and rediscovered common purpose had already gone a long way towards improving the quality of our discussions, enhancing mutual respect and opening windows of opportunity for compromise. I believe that the 56 participating States can all claim credit for the outstanding results of the Athens meeting and that this sense of rightful shared ownership encourages us to help our Kazakh friends steer the next phase of the process.

#### **WEIGHTY MATTERS**

It is easy for an outside observer to conclude that our every waking minute was taken up by the Corfu Process. But members of other delegations and the Secretariat shall not easily forget the late-night strategy sessions and informal meetings we held throughout 2009 on other weighty matters.

We sought solutions for the peaceful resolution of the protracted conflicts through results-oriented negotiations and concrete steps towards confidence-building and reducing tensions. Our biggest regret was that we could not save the OSCE Mission to Georgia despite the time and energy devoted to this major concern.

Parallel to these efforts, the Chairmanship also tried to keep the momentum going on its day-to-day action agenda — whether it was implementing activities encompassing all three dimensions, assisting the Organization to improve its efficiency, or taking care of the needs of our Partners for Co-operation.

As I write this, the Secretary General's 2009 *Annual Report* is under preparation, with the chapter on our Chairmanship at centre stage. The stock-taking of our achievements (and non-achievements) is proving to be a bitter-sweet exercise. Reviewing the highs and lows and the twists and turns of 2009, we feel as if

we are on an emotional roller-coaster all over again. There is no denying that the past 12 months have been difficult and frustrating. But they have also been exciting and in the end, highly rewarding. Overall, the year has turned out to be a "marvellous journey".

In fact, what better way to express my appreciation to the long list of individuals who accompanied the Greek Chairmanship on the marvellous journey to its Ithaca, than to once again share the wise lessons of Ulysses and Homer's *Odyssey* as evoked by Constantine Kavafis in *Ithaca*. I consider it one of the most beautiful poems ever written in the Greek language.

*As you set out for Ithaca  
hope the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
Laistrygonians, and Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon — don't be afraid of them:  
you'll never find things like that on your way  
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
as long as a rare excitement  
stirs your spirit and your body.  
Laistrygonians, and Cyclops,  
wild Poseidon — you won't encounter them  
unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.  
(...)  
Keep Ithaca always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you're destined for.  
But do not hurry the journey at all.  
Better if it lasts for years,  
so you're old by the time you reach the island,  
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.  
Ithaca gave you the marvellous journey.  
Without her you would not have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.  
And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled  
you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of  
experience,  
you'll have understood by then what these Ithacas  
mean.  
"Ithaca", Constantine Kavafis, 1863-1933  
(translated by Edmund Keeley)*

Ambassador Mara Marinaki served as the Chairperson of the Permanent Council under the Greek Chairmanship of the OSCE. Prior to her assuming the post of Permanent Representative to the OSCE in September 2007, she was Director for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen in the EU General Directorate of the Greek Foreign Ministry.

## MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON THE OSCE CORFU PROCESS

SEVENTEENTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS, 1-2 DECEMBER 2009

### Reconfirm-Review-Reinvigorate Security and Co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the 56 participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, meet, for the second time this year after our informal meeting in Corfu, to mark the significant progress that we have achieved together since the reunification of Europe and the elimination of Europe's old divisions. We reconfirm that the vision of a free, democratic and more integrated OSCE area, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security remains a common goal, which we are determined to reach.

2. To achieve this goal, much work remains to be accomplished. We continue to be seriously concerned that the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and OSCE commitments are not fully respected and implemented; that the use of force has not ceased to be considered as an option in settling disputes; that the danger of conflicts between States has not been eliminated, and armed conflicts have occurred even in the last decades; that tensions still exist and many conflicts remain unresolved; that stalemates in conventional arms control, resolution of disagreements in this field, resumption of full implementation of the CFE Treaty regime, and restoration of its viability require urgent concerted action by its States Parties; and that our common achievements in the fields of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms need to be fully safeguarded and further advanced. This is occurring at a time when new emerging transnational threats require, more than ever, common responses.

3. We recognize that these security challenges, further accentuated by the ongoing international financial and economic crisis, should be tackled with a renewed commitment to achieve results through multilateral dialogue and co-operation. At this stage, our highest priority remains to re-establish our trust and confidence, as well as to recapture the sense of common purpose that brought together our predecessors in Helsinki almost 35 years ago. In this context, we welcome the dialogue on the current and future challenges for security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area, initiated at the 2008 Helsinki Ministerial Council and launched by the Greek Chairmanship in June 2009 as the "Corfu Process", aimed at achieving the aforementioned goals. We consider the first ever OSCE Informal Ministerial Meeting in Corfu, with broad participation, as a milestone in this process, where we expressed our political will to confront security challenges, in all three OSCE dimensions.

4. The Corfu Process has already improved the quality and contributed to the revitalization of our political dialogue in the OSCE on security and co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok. We are committed to continue and further develop this process, setting ambitious, concrete and pragmatic goals, while also focusing on the key issues identified in our work so far. The OSCE, due to its broad membership and its multidimensional approach to common, comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security, provides the appropriate forum for this dialogue. We welcome the valuable contributions of all relevant organizations and institutions dealing with security, on the basis of the Platform for Co-operative Security.

5. The dialogue within the Corfu Process will be grounded in the OSCE and in the principles of equality, partnership, co-operation, inclusiveness and transparency. It will aim at addressing disagreements openly, honestly and in an unbiased manner, acknowledging our diversities and concerns, in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. It will build on three basic guidelines:

- (a) Adherence to the concept of comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security, as enshrined in the OSCE fundamental documents;
- (b) Compliance with OSCE norms, principles and commitments in all three OSCE dimensions, in full and in good faith, and in a consistent manner by all;
- (c) Determination to strengthen partnership and co-operation in the OSCE area, as well as to enhance the effectiveness of the OSCE and its contribution to security in our common space.

6. The Corfu Process will be taken forward by our Permanent Representatives to the OSCE in Vienna, in accordance with the decision we are adopting today. We remain committed to provide strong political impetus to the Corfu Process, and we are looking forward to reassessing its progress in 2010, in the format and level that we will deem appropriate, taking into consideration the results we achieve.

7. We welcome Kazakhstan in the 2010 OSCE Chairmanship, the first ever to be exercised by a Central Asian OSCE participating State. We note with interest its proposal to hold an OSCE summit in 2010. We point out that such a high-level meeting would require adequate preparation in terms of substance and modalities. We task the Permanent Council to engage in exploratory consultations to determine the extent of progress on the OSCE agenda to inform our decision.

## Decisions in Athens: A scorecard

by Ambassador Mara Marinaki

By adopting a Political Declaration and a Ministerial Decision on the Corfu Process, the participating States sent an unambiguous signal that they were ready to turn a fresh page, said Greek Prime Minister and Foreign Minister George Papandreou on 2 December 2009. However, the outgoing Chairperson-in-Office stressed at the end of the Ministerial Council Meeting in Athens that these two milestone documents could be made meaningful only if they were tied to concrete progress in confronting the key security challenges of the 21st century. I believe that the meeting's bumper crop of 16 Ministerial Decisions in all three dimensions and five Declarations provide the inextricable link between the OSCE-anchored renewed security dialogue and dynamic action. Having been heavily engaged in late-night strategy sessions and informal meetings to pave the way for these Decisions and Declarations, I thought I would attempt to draw up a scorecard of how we all fared in Athens and where we could have done better.

**Political-military dimension.** The Decisions concerning issues relevant to the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition highlight the FSC's undisputed role in addressing both traditional and new security challenges.

Throughout the year, the participating States demonstrated growing interest in non-military aspects of security, focusing on specific aspects in the fight against terrorism. The Decisions to promote the international legal framework against terrorism and to help enhance travel document security reflect this concern.

In the same vein, but going even further with a view to strengthening the co-ordination of efforts *within* and *outside* the Organization, the 56 adopted a Decision addressing transnational threats and challenges to security and stability. The rationale behind this agreement was to boost the OSCE's cross-dimensional initiatives, which aim at tackling cyber-threats, risks to energy security, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and organized crime, including illicit arms transfers, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings.

**Economic and environmental dimension.** Three strong Decisions underscore the prominent role of economic and environmental matters within the comprehensive and indivisible concept of security: The Decisions on strengthening energy security, migration management and the future orientation of the second dimension, focusing on enhancing effectiveness, reflect our potential to address economic instability in a more coherent fashion and will undoubtedly drive the OSCE's economic and environmental agenda for years to come.

It is regrettable that agreement on a decision that many of us had been counting on — confronting the security implications of climate change — proved as elusive as it did in Helsinki in 2008. We trust that our colleagues in the Kazakhstan Chairmanship will continue to pursue this issue vigorously under more favourable circumstances.



Athens, 2 December 2009. The 2009 OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister George Papandreou, Ambassador Mara Marinaki, Deputy Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas and Ambassador Nikolaos Kalantzianos, Head of Greece's OSCE Chairmanship Task Force (left to right) hail the results of the Ministerial Council Meeting. (OSCE/George Kontarinos)

**Human dimension.** Throughout 2009, the principle guiding the Greek Chairmanship's every action was: "We should never forget what we are working for: the inherent dignity of the individual." We were especially pleased, therefore, with the adoption of the Ministerial Decisions aimed at combating hate crimes, drawing Roma and Sinti closer to the mainstream of society, and enhancing women's participation in political and public life. We look forward to the agreed high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination in Astana on 29 and 30 June 2010.

Although we knew they were fraught with difficulties, we stood firmly behind the draft decisions on fostering media freedom and enhancing pluralism (which came close to being adopted) and strengthening the OSCE's legal framework. We have not lost hope that consensus will be reached on these critical concerns one day soon.

**Ministerial Declarations.** Foreign Ministers issued special declarations calling attention to the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. They also reaffirmed the OSCE's commitments focusing on the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Echoing events in Helsinki in 2008, the Ministers could not agree on a statement on Moldova concerning the Transdniestrian conflict. However, they did issue one hailing the positive developments regarding the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In other matters, the Ministerial Council agreed that Ireland would assume the OSCE Chairmanship in 2012, following Lithuania in 2011, and granted Australia the status of Partner for Co-operation, joining 11 other countries in OSCE's extended family. The 18th Meeting of the Ministerial Council was set for 1 and 2 December 2010, in Astana, "without prejudice to a possible decision by the Permanent Council to hold a Meeting of Heads of State or Government in 2010".

Ministerial Decisions:  
[www.osce.org/  
conferences/mc\\_2009](http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009)

## *Nagorno-Karabakh: Working on the ground for a peaceful settlement*

The longstanding conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh exploded into all-out war at the beginning of the 1990s, brutally relegating the CSCE's celebration of "a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe" to a future yet to be earned. A cease-fire between Azerbaijan, Armenia and the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic of 12 May 1994 is in place, but a peace settlement is still outstanding. The fact that the fragile cease-fire has held at all is due in no small measure to the important and often dangerous work being carried out by Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk of Poland and his team, who run the presence on the ground that the OSCE has maintained since 1995.

Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk is Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference. The unwieldy title mirrors the delicacy of his task. He constitutes the opposing sides' only point of contact outside of the formal negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan that are facilitated by the OSCE Minsk Group and at which he is also



OSCE/FRANZ MORGENSEBESSER

present. Working from headquarters in Tbilisi, Georgia, a location chosen for its neutrality in relation to this conflict, he is mandated to "assist the Chairman and the Minsk Group Co-chairs in achieving a cessation of the armed conflict, creating conditions for the deployment of an OSCE peace-keeping operation and facilitating a lasting political settlement."

Together with five international staff members, of which three rotate through field residences in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert/ Khankendi and two are based permanently in Tbilisi, Ambassador Kasprzyk regularly monitors the approximately 220 kilometre-long Line of Contact and also the Azerbaijani-Armenian border. The OSCE monitoring operations are the only confidence- and security-building measure being carried out in the military sphere.



## Facilitating dialogue

### Interview with Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk

*Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk has been Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference since January 1997 and was Acting Personal Representative from July 1996. Prior to his appointment, he served as a senior Polish diplomat in Cuba and Zimbabwe, where he was Ambassador and head of the embassy. The high-level contacts and intimate knowledge of the region that Ambassador Kasprzyk has built up over the past 14 years are invaluable for achieving a peace settlement consistent with the reality on the ground. In February 2010, he reflected on his work, answering questions by OSCE Spokesperson Virginie Coulloudon.*

**Virginie Coulloudon:** An important part of your mandate is the monitoring of the cease-fire. You have drawn attention on many occasions to cease-fire violations. Has the situation improved over the years? Has there been any progress on the withdrawal of snipers from the front lines as recommended by the Minsk Group Co-chair countries at the Helsinki Ministerial?

The situation on the front lines has not changed dramatically since the cease-fire was agreed. There are unfortunately a number of casualties each year — approximately 30 (occasionally civilians) — as a result



OSCE/PETER KEAY

## Why “Minsk Conference” and “Minsk Group”?

When fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated in 1992, the CSCE Ministers requested the Chairperson-in-Office Jiří Dienstbier of Czechoslovakia to convene a conference to negotiate a peaceful settlement and chose Minsk as the conference venue. The Minsk Conference has yet to be held.

The OSCE Minsk Group, comprising the original conference participants and headed by Co-Chairs Ambassador Bernard Fassier of France, Ambassador Yuri Merzlyakov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Robert Bradtke of the United States, leads international efforts to resolve the conflict. Members of the Group, in addition to the three Co-Chair countries, are Belarus, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and Turkey.

The Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference work towards creating conditions permitting the holding of a peace conference. The OSCE High-Level Planning Group, based in Vienna, prepares plans for the deployment of a peacekeeping force once a peace agreement has been concluded.

of shooting incidents on the Line of Contact and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. In 2009, the number of fatalities decreased to 19, almost certainly as a result of the intensity of the negotiations. Each casualty is a tragedy and should be avoided, especially considering that a ceasefire is in place. With regard to the withdrawal of snipers, unfortunately no agreement has been reached on this issue as yet.

The international community has traditionally regarded the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as frozen or protracted. Had the conflict been considered “hot”, would this have elicited more resources and political will from the international community? The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict cannot be considered “frozen”. In fact, only the solution is frozen. Since last year we have seen the most intensive phase of the negotiation process to

date: the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met six times in 2009, three times in expanded format with President Medvedev, and once so far in 2010, again in the presence of President Medvedev. The personal involvement of President Medvedev resulted in the first-ever statement on Nagorno-Karabakh signed by the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan — the so-called Moscow Declaration of November 2008.

If this conflict were in fact to become “hot” and hostilities to resume, obviously the international community would be involved even to a greater extent.

Since the Madrid Document containing Basic Principles for a settlement was presented to Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2007, the parties have been saying that there are only a few

obstacles to be overcome in the mediation process before a peace agreement can be reached. The negotiation curve is often uneven, with the parties' expectations rising high at times and suffering severe setbacks at others. Can you describe your work in support of the Minsk Process?

I am responsible for keeping the Chairperson-in-Office informed and up-to-date on the situation on the ground and the current state of the talks. Acting on his behalf, I work in support of the peace process, maintaining contact with the parties, promoting confidence- and security-building measures. I also participate in the Minsk Group Co-Chairs' visits and their meetings with the leaderships. One of the most important parts of the process is maintaining dialogue. Facilitating that dialogue is one of my main functions. My knowledge of the situation on the ground is also used occasionally by the mediators. Since I am on the ground, I occasionally convey information on behalf of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to the leaderships and vice versa. The monitoring conducted by my Office has on occasion decreased growing tension that could, in turn, have obstructed the negotiations.

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*“Each casualty is a tragedy and should be avoided.”*

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From the onset, you have chosen to be publicly discreet about the negotiation process and have very rarely talked to the media. Is such a policy of confidentiality a key element in confidence-building?

Confidentiality is crucial to any such process. A certain element of trust has to be fostered so as to maintain a dialogue between leaders of countries that technically remain in a state of war with each other. Before an agreement is reached, it would be difficult to put it up for public discussion, as this could torpedo the process. For that reason, the leaders have requested that the process be completely confidential. The extent of what can be disclosed has to be carefully measured. Above all, one also has to look at the mandate. The negotiations are mandated to the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. I am a silent witness. However, I would like to underline that the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries, when they gathered in L'Aquila for the G8 Summit in July 2009, disclosed the fundamental elements of the Basic Principles that are being negotiated. The so-called “L'Aquila Statement” outlines the main elements of the talks at the moment.

One could argue that confidentiality is a double-edged sword and that the absence of public debate on the substance of the negotiations risks fuelling rumours on both sides. What do you tell critics who argue that rumours are detrimental to the peace process and that more public transparency is needed?

The Minsk Group Co-Chairs and successive OSCE Chairmanships have on numerous occasions called upon the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders to do more to prepare their publics for the necessity of compromise. Both parties accept that compromise is a necessary part of the process. Public transparency will certainly be needed when the populations are asked to accept the results of the final negotiations. The leaderships will have to convince their populations of this, in order to get the necessary support for the implementation of the measures to be taken.

In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, there is arguably a tension between the principle of self-determination and that of territorial integrity. Such an apparent contradiction can also be found in the Helsinki Final Act and the Decalogue. What is your view of how this can be reconciled in the settlement process?

With the help and support of the mediators, it is up to the parties to find a balance between the various principles being discussed.

The L'Aquila Statement issued by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries on the occasion of the G8 summit in July 2009 stresses that conflicts tend to recur if insufficiently addressed by the international community. Do you feel that there is currently enough political will to address the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?

As I said earlier, 2009 saw an enormous increase in activity related to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The L'Aquila Statement is evidence of the involvement of the Co-Chair countries at the highest level. Each successive OSCE Chairmanship is actively engaged. Already this year the Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kanat Saudabayev visited Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution was very high on his agenda. The OSCE is using all the resources at its disposal in its engagement in the resolution process. It is a complicated process and has its own specific challenges. Clearly, a great deal of political will is required for the parties to be able to make the necessary concessions to achieve a lasting settlement.

We know that the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG)'s operational plans are based on possible



scenarios. Depending on the option, the Group estimates that a peacekeeping operation would need between 1,500 and 4,500 personnel. Since no agreement has been reached and negotiations between the parties are strictly confidential, how do you keep the HLPG well enough informed to be able to carry out its strategic planning?

All three elements of the Minsk Process — the Minsk Group, the HLPG and the Personal Representative and his Office — being part of the same process, co-operate closely. Co-operation among the three has always been excellent. It is the task of the Chairmanship to give directives to the HLPG, also taking into account suggestions from the Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

How would you describe the secret of a successful mediator?

Based on my experience, to be a successful mediator one obviously has to be an impartial, balanced and transparent broker. Anybody with a hidden agenda or one's own interests involved will sooner or later be rejected by the parties. Confidence is therefore one of the basic conditions. To be successful means being able to achieve progress and that depends on the willingness of the parties, their political will enhanced by the mediator's ability to present reasonable, acceptable solutions and persuade them that their acceptance would benefit everybody involved.



OSCE/PETER KEAY

## Basic Principles of a settlement

In making proposals for a peace settlement, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs seek to strike a balance between three of the ten “Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States” (the so-called “Decalogue”) enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act: refraining from the threat or use of force; territorial integrity of States; and equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

Current negotiations are based on Basic Principles that the Co-Chairs first proposed in the so-called Madrid Document, presented to Armenia and Azerbaijan on the margins of the 2007 OSCE Ministerial Council. The main elements of the Basic Principles, as outlined by the Presidents of France, Russian Federation and the United States at the G8 summit in L'Aquila on 10 July 2009, are:

- return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control;
- an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance;

- a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh;
- future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will;
- the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and
- international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation.

In a statement issued at the Athens Ministerial Council meeting on 2 December 2009, the OSCE foreign ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work intensively to resolve remaining issues: “We urge the parties to sustain the positive dynamic of the negotiations and strongly support their commitment to finalize the Basic Principles on the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, based on the Madrid Document in order to begin drafting a comprehensive peace agreement in good faith and without delay.”



The Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference has conducted over 230 monitoring operations since 1996. Peter Keay, a Field Assistant in the Office, describes a typical expedition to the Line of Contact.



Peter Keay has served in the Office of the Personal Representative since 2004 and has participated in over 100 monitoring operations. He was previously with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and worked in the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. He was also part of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission from 1998 to 1999.

## Monitoring the front lines in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

by Peter Keay

The day starts with a vehicle check. When we monitor the front lines, some of the terrain we cross is extremely challenging. In an average year, the vehicles cover around 60,000 kilometres. Therefore, they have to be kept in excellent condition. Our monitoring of the Line of Contact is scheduled to take place tomorrow, Wednesday.

On Monday, I arrived in Yerevan from Tbilisi, where our headquarters is located. My colleague from Tbilisi will travel this afternoon from Tbilisi to Ganja in northern Azerbaijan. Ambassador Kasprzyk and he will lead the monitoring teams from

either side of the Line of Contact.

Today, Ambassador Kasprzyk and I leave at mid-morning for Stepanakert/Khankendi, usually a five-hour drive through the mountains. In early February we have the additional challenge of snow and ice.

The Office of the Personal Representative is the only international body with permanent access to the military front lines and has had a residence for the rotating field assistant in Stepanakert/Khankendi since 1995. Driving around the region, it is easy to forget that Armenia and Azerbaijan are locked in a state of “no peace, no war” over Nagorno-Karabakh, but going into the trenches with a helmet and flak

Getting to the monitoring site involves a five-hour drive through the mountains and, in the winter, contending with ice and snow. (OSCE/Peter Keay)



jacket brings everything into sharp relief.

This morning we load the cars with all the things we will need for the journey and for the monitoring tomorrow. Snow chains, radios, binoculars, flags. The drive over the mountain passes is spectacular. Breathtaking views of snow-capped mountains. We arrive in Stepanakert/Khankendi and meet with the authorities to go over the plan for the following day. Along with the driver, we make sure the vehicle is OK after the long trip and ready for the journey to the front lines.

Wednesday morning. We meet our escort party and head off. I communicate via satellite telephone with my colleague who will be conducting the monitoring from the other side, to make sure we are on schedule. At 0800 hrs local time, they have already been on the road for an hour. Aside from the escort party that travels alongside us, we also meet up with the local military commander en route. He and his team give us a detailed briefing on the military situation on the ground and any developments since the last monitoring.

This time they inform us about two casualties the previous week. On average there are around 30 fatalities on the front lines every year, although there was a sharp drop in 2009. These are the first casualties we have heard about this year and it always gives pause for thought. I find out later from my colleagues that on the other side, the first casualties of the year have also been reported. Having served in different conflict zones, I am aware of the costs of war, but these reports of lost lives are a stark reminder of the fact that several thousand troops face each other over a line that has not moved in 16 years.

Having reached a point around four kilometres from the Line of Contact, we arrive at the same time as our colleagues to a similar point on the other side. We now have permanent very high frequency (VHF) radio communication with the OSCE team

on the other side. At this stage, the local commanders issue security guarantees via our radios for our onward journey and we reach the monitoring site. After another set of security guarantees from the local commanders, we put on flak jackets and helmets, take an OSCE flag and binoculars, and await the order to move.

Once everything is ready and everyone in place, the Personal Representative, using a handheld VHF radio, starts the monitoring and we walk through the trenches to the agreed observation site. When both teams are in the pre-arranged place, we raise flags and come up above the trench line. Despite all the security measures, shooting incidents have taken place at this stage in the monitoring in the past, and everyone is on full alert. We look out over the bleak neutral zone and spot our colleagues on the other side.

On this occasion there are around 400 metres — and an extensive minefield — between the groups. Sometimes the distance is less, sometimes a lot more — depending on the terrain. The local commanders on the opposing sides are offered the chance to use our radios to speak to each other, but decline. Although the negotiation process is in full swing, at times like these, reconciliation seems too distant.

Over the next two days, we have a long journey ahead of us — back to Yerevan and then onward to Tbilisi. But for the moment, we are standing above the trenches and can only hope that soon, once a peace agreement has been signed, the soldiers can go home to their families and the de-miners can begin the long process of clearing the paths for these people to re-establish contact.



# Crimea's past catches up with its present

Protecting people from  
explosive remnants of war

**Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine, September 2009.** The crowds of tourists were thinning, the weather was changing from sub-tropical to mild-Mediterranean and the clear waters were still warm enough to dip into — an ideal time for an off-season holiday off the beaten path. But, for the two experts from Denmark and their counterparts from the United States, basking in the autumnal sun had to take the back seat for now. They had come to Crimea for a sole purpose: to find out how its nearly 2 million residents could best be helped by the OSCE to protect themselves from the dangerous remnants of the region's past.

by Niels Poul Petersen and Maria Brandstetter

**A**s the visitors drove along the peaceful Black Sea coast set against ragged limestone cliffs, they found it hard to imagine that the peninsula had served as the theatre for an endless wave of invaders through the centuries. Skiffs and Sarmats, Greeks and Genoans, and Khazars and Kipchaks were just some of the adventurers who had made their way to these shores, contributing to Crimea's richly layered ancient heritage and exotic attractions.

However, the legacy left by modern warfare was bound to be vastly different. In the Crimean peninsula, vast swathes of fields, woods and shorelines that are contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW) speak volumes about the bloody and intense fighting that took place in Ukraine's territory during World War II.

"Explosive remnants of war" sums it up succinctly. A term introduced by the humanitarian community, it refers to a whole range

Inkerman Caves, near Sevastopol, September 2009. An OSCE expert makes his way down a newly constructed 30-metre shaft, leading to one of the caves that collapsed after a World War II explosion. Some 3,000 tonnes of explosive remnants of war have to be cleared from the caves. (OSCE/Niels Poul Petersen)



**Inkerman Caves.** These mountainside entrances to the former ammunition warehouse of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet are still in use, but several collapsed and were blocked after a World War II explosion. The Ukrainian Government is constructing shafts to gain access to collapsed caves. (OSCE/Niels Poul Petersen)



of remaining unexploded ordnance such as bombs, rockets, hand grenades and artillery shells that pose a grave threat to the population and the environment long after armed hostilities are over.

“Between 1997 and 2008, some 70 accidental explosions in Crimea killed 35 people and maimed or injured 67 others, including 21 children,” said Maj.-Gen. Vasyliy Kvashuk, who is at the forefront of civil defence efforts in Ukraine’s Ministry for Emergency Situations. Most of these had taken place in and around Kerch and Sevastopol and involved curiosity seekers as well as “black diggers” — people not authorized to handle explosive remnants of war.

“Since 2001, we have retrieved and destroyed more than 52,000 ERW items,” he said, “but

the problem is simply too overwhelming for us to deal with on our own, especially because accidental explosions in the recent past have made the terrain in the ammunition sites even more challenging. If the OSCE is able to provide us with the latest machinery, on-hands training, personal protective gear and ordnance detection equipment, our ability to locate and retrieve these dangerous items safely and efficiently will improve dramatically.”

Maj.-Gen. Kvashuk’s no-nonsense briefing served to remind the experts how crucial it was for them to obtain an accurate picture of Ukraine’s ERW situation and to identify the Ministry’s precise needs under an OSCE project. Drawn up jointly by the Ministry and the OSCE’s Forum for Security Co-operation, the project focuses on the country’s most heavily contaminated areas, all former sites of World War II and Soviet ammunition storage facilities: Bila Tserkva, near Kyiv, and the port cities of Kerch and Sevastopol.

### **KERCH**

From the highest vantage point of the once-thriving fishing port of Kerch, the experts took in the sweeping panorama and tried to fathom the impact of the vicious exchange of aerial bombardments and heavy artillery and mortar fire during World War II.

“Just think: Between 1941 and 1944, Kerch changed hands four times, claiming thousands of victims on both sides,” said Alexander Saveleyev, who is responsible for political-military and environmental activities in the office of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. “Is it any wonder that the place is still heavily littered with unexploded ordnance? By the end of the war, the city’s population had dwindled from 70,000 to 6,500.”

### **Estimated (unofficial) 2010 population in “explosive remnants of war” project area**

Bila Tserkva: 215,000

Sevastopol: 380,450 (including Inkerman: 11,300)

Kerch: 158,160





1



2



3

1 and 2 Kerch fortress. Rusting metal containers reveal bullets that are still as deadly as they were 60 years ago. (OSCE/Niels Poul Petersen and OSCE/Rene Bebeau)

3 Kerch. About 30 kilometres of the coastal shore are contaminated with explosive remnants of war. Unexploded ordnance retrieved from the sea look deceptively like ordinary stones. (OSCE/Niels Poul Petersen)

4 Kerch fortress, off the Black Sea. About 2,000 tonnes of unexploded ordnance are stored in some 150 structures that blend with the bucolic landscape. (OSCE/Niels Poul Petersen)



4

Steeped in multilayered military history, the Kerch fortress is a sprawling complex of buildings partly concealed underground and interconnected by tunnels. About 150 structures — out of an original 300 that could hold up to 9,000 personnel — blend with undulating low hills overlooking the Black Sea. Most recently used by the Soviets as an ammunition warehouse, the bunkers, magazines and garisons were originally built by Russian Emperor Alexander II following the Crimean War of 1854-1855 to make it easier for him to control the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.

“After years of being closed to the public, the 400-hectare grounds are slowly and steadily becoming a tourist magnet and a popular recreational oasis,” said a local guide. “However, the city cannot develop the site and make it fully accessible until the authorities manage to extricate an estimated 2,000 tonnes of unexploded ordnance still remaining. Only 30 per cent of the area has been cleared so far.”

In one of the collapsed depots, the Ukrainians drew the experts’ attention to several 152-mm navy grenades that appeared as if they had been freshly dug up from just below ground surface. Once opened, rusting metal ammunition containers that had been half-buried in the rubble revealed bullets that were in relatively good condition. “After more than 60 years, the danger is that the explosives can become unstable and detonate,” said Mr. Savelyev.

“Every elementary and high school in Kerch is required to have a special course teaching students how to identify and avoid explosive remnants of war and how to go about reporting any suspicious-looking objects found in the ground. But boys will be boys and accidents happen all the time,” said Kerch Deputy Mayor Aleksey Ivanovich Milovanov.

“Even if they hear regular reports of casualties, and even if they can’t figure out where the fuse of a particular ammunition is, ‘black diggers’ — which include kids, teenagers and adults — lose any sense of fear or danger after a while. They can even remove a 1,000-kilo aviation bomb from a site and sell it for metal!”

## SEVASTOPOL

After a four-hour drive the following day, another military curiosity awaited the group. In the town of Inkerman, five kilometres east of Sevastopol, eight massive entrances on the side of the MacKenzie Mountains, came into view. These were the gateway to the Inkerman Caves, which had served as the ammunition warehouse of the Black Sea Fleet until an explosion during World War II caused some of the caves to collapse, blocking the labyrinth of corridors and storage galleries.

To gain access to the caves, the Ministry for Emergency Situations constructed vertical shafts a few years ago. Displaying the same spirit of openness and transparency as in an earlier joint project with the OSCE in an ammunition depot near Novobohdanivka in eastern Ukraine, Ministry officials invited the experts to make their way down the shaft to see the pace of clearance operations for themselves.

“At the bottom of the ladder, 30 metres deep, we reached an area of about 100 square metres. This was the cleared space so far in this particular cave,” said Gary Wraalstad of the Humanitarian Mine Action Programme, U.S. European

Command, describing the underground experience. “We saw that the Ukrainians had had to manually construct pillars five metres high to support the cave roof. Massive lime stones and rubble had to be further broken up inside the cave and removed via the shaft. Any ammunition that was found also had to be taken up the same way. And equipment and construction material had to be transported up and down the shaft, which was very time-consuming.”

Ukrainian officials were well aware that the operations were far from ideal. “So far out of an estimated 9,000 tonnes before the explosion, 3,000 tonnes of explosive remnants of war — ranging from artillery shells to aerial bombs — are still stored in the caves,” Maj.-Gen. Kvashuk said. “We have been able to remove only 75 tonnes of ammunition. At the pace we’re going, if we don’t manage to obtain outside assistance, it could take 20 years to complete the job.”

A city official called the experts’ attention to the several small cave openings through which children could easily wriggle. “If any of the ammunition inside the caves explodes and self-ignites, it could have a domino effect and lead to more detonations,” he warned. “The consequences could prove fatal: the caves are right next to residential and commercial buildings, a railroad track and a major highway connecting Inkerman with Sevastopol.”

In Kerch and Sevastopol, as well as on an earlier OSCE experts’ visit to Bila Tserkva, near Kyiv, local officials could not stress enough that while their key concern was obviously people’s safety and security, the sheer abundance of explosive remnants of war was also a major stumbling block to socio-economic development and risked polluting water supplies and agricultural lands. “The longer it takes to bring about favourable living conditions, the more social tensions and unease build up,” said one.

The Danish and U.S. Governments, through their delegations to the OSCE, have been the first to respond to Ukraine’s request for assistance in October 2007. On a visit to Kyiv in October 2009, Denmark’s Deputy Permanent Secretary of State for Defence, Kristian Fischer, announced a contribution of €50,000 to the FSC’s special fund. The amount has been earmarked for personal protection gear such as Kevlar helmets and flak jackets for clearance personnel, ferrous locators that are capable of detecting metal buried deep into the ground and special detonation equipment. Training for explosive ordnance disposal teams is also part of the assistance package.

Following suit, the United States has also announced that it will contribute about \$110,000 worth of personal protection equipment and ferrous locators and provide disposal



Bila Tserkva, near Kyiv. Experts examine air bombs at an abandoned ammunition storage site in a forest frequently visited by area residents. (OSCE/Alexander Savelyev)

teams with specialized on-the-spot training in operating the equipment.

The news was met with a great deal of relief in Bila Tserkva, Kerch and Inkerman. “Project activities can now get under way in the spring, a season of renewed hope when Crimea’s flora and fauna are in full display,” said Crimea’s Deputy Prime Minister Azis R. Abdulayev. “We can hardly wait for the day when we can pronounce ourselves free of all explosive remnants of war so that the Crimean peninsula can finally follow its dream of being the recreational pearl of Ukraine.”

“I’m fully aware that support for the project is a joint effort, and I hope other participating States demonstrate their interest too,” said Mr. Fischer in Kyiv. “Once Ukraine completes this project, people’s lives will improve and new opportunities will open up in the affected areas.”

Lt. Col. Niels Poul Petersen, Military Adviser at the Mission of Denmark to the OSCE, is the FSC Co-ordinator for projects dealing with stockpiles of conventional ammunition. Maria Brandstetter is a CSBM Officer in the FSC Support Section of the OSCE Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre.

## Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War

Ukraine is a signatory to Protocol V of the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The Protocol, which came into force in November 2006, is the first international agreement to require the parties to an armed conflict to “mark and clear, remove or destroy” all unexploded munitions that threaten civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers once the fighting is over. “Explosive remnants of war” refers to unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance such as artillery shells, bombs, hand grenades, mortars, cluster submunitions and rockets.

# Ridding Ukraine of a toxic menace

by Susanna Lööf and Oksana Polyuga



The project to rid Ukraine of its 16,000 tonnes of the toxic chemical *mélange*, once used to fire rockets and now a serious hazard for the population and the environment, is by far the largest project of its kind ever undertaken by the OSCE. So far, four trainloads of the substance have been removed from storage sites in the Vinnytsya and Ivano-Frankivsk regions.

**C**hilly temperatures and a light drizzle on a grey November day cannot detract from the beauty of the woodlands surrounding the town of Kalynivka in the south-western Ukrainian region of Vinnytsya. But among the trees on the nearby military base, a danger lurked for many years: inexorably deteriorating containers holding the toxic rocket propellant component *mélange*. Until just recently, military personnel would occasionally see red vapours rising from the vats nestled in the forest, a reminder of a risk that grew more acute each day.

*Mélange* is an extremely toxic chemical that causes spontaneous combustion when it comes into contact with anything organic. Armies in the former Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact and elsewhere used it to propel short- and medium-range rockets starting in the 1960s. When the Cold War ended, the stocks became obsolete and slowly developed into a serious environmental and security threat.

As time goes on, stored *mélange* grows increasingly corrosive and leakages through welded seams and around the necks of aging storage tanks become a real worry. The substance can be deadly upon contact, burning the skin, eyes, mucous membranes and lungs. Escaped *mélange*, which quickly turns into gas, can form a toxic cloud capable of poisoning human beings dozens of kilometres from the leakage.

Thanks to a project run by the OSCE Secretariat, this horrible scenario no longer weighs down upon Kalynivka. The *mélange* is gone from the military base, and work is underway to remove the dangerous substance from another storage site in Ukraine. Plans are in place for the OSCE to help Ukraine rid itself of all its *mélange*, a giant project that requires millions of Euros in voluntary donations by OSCE participating States.

Earlier, the OSCE helped Albania, Armenia, Georgia and Montenegro safely dispose of

The south-western Ukrainian town of Kalynivka is a safer place since the toxic rocket propellant *mélange* was removed from the nearby military base through an OSCE-run project. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)





Journalists listen as Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (centre) and Oleksandr Dombrovskyy, Governor of the Vinnytsya region, brief them on preparations to remove mélangé from the military base near Kalynivka, 18 November 2009. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)



mélange, but the stocks held in those countries were much smaller than those in Ukraine.

On 18 November 2009, journalists arrived at the Kalynivka base to witness preparations for the departure of the first train filled with the poison. There, posing in front of railway tanks holding mélangé, Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, and Oleksandr Dombrovskyy, Governor for the Vinnytsya region, explained the significance of the project. Fire fighters stood guard nearby, ready to act in case of spills.

“The removal and disposal of the mélangé stored in Ukraine helps eliminate a serious threat to the hundreds of thousands of people living near storage sites, and to the environment,” said Ambassador Kopaj.

Later, as the group was walking through the base, a loud shout resounded and suddenly, action was swift: military personnel donned chemical suits and started spraying a container with a colourless liquid. After a second or two of bewilderment, it became clear to all that the action was just an exercise to maintain readiness in case of a real emergency — and to provide action footage for television reports. As an unpleasant smell indicated, the liquid was ammonia, which would effectively bind any

escaping poisonous mélangé vapours.

“Special training exercises are conducted ahead of each loading operation,” said Mathew Geertsen, Senior Forum for Security Co-operation Support Officer at the OSCE Secretariat, who manages the project. “Their purpose is not only to test whether military personnel and equipment are ready for loading, but also to ensure that military units and civilian emergency authorities can co-operate smoothly — in case something goes wrong despite all precautions,” he explained.

At the market in the small town of Kalynivka, several people said they knew little if anything about the toxic threat posed by the substance stored at the military base just a few kilometres away.

“We have lived here most of our lives, and learned only yesterday from the news that this substance has been stored so close to us,” a fruit seller said.

His wife and business partner added: “We knew about the military base, but had no idea about what was going on there.”

A boy selling freshly caught fish from the nearby river repeated the definition of mélangé as if reciting his lessons: “They said on the news yesterday that mélangé is a rocket fuel

1 A military officer douses mélangé tanks with liquid ammonia in an exercise to train emergency procedures. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)

2 A skull and crossbones and the Ukrainian word for “danger” on the gate to the military base near Kalynivka warn of the hazardous chemical stored within. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)

3 Military personnel must wear protective clothing and follow strict safety procedures when working in proximity to stored mélangé. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)



## OSCE projects to remove mélange

Under the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition agreed by the Forum for Security Co-operation on 19 November 2003, participating States can apply for OSCE international financial and/or technical support for disposing of their rocket fuel components.

All OSCE mélange elimination projects follow the same technical standards of performance:

- The total volume of mélange and tank wash residues must be converted to material safe for release to the environment.
- No pollutant releases exceeding the most stringent of local, federal, or EU standards will be allowed during the treatment operations. This includes standards for air emissions, wastewater discharges, solid wastes or land application standards.
- All operations must be conducted to fully protect the workers involved.
- After adhering to all environmental regulations, the “least cost to treat technology” is determined to be the best for a specific region.

<b>Georgia</b>	450 tonnes	converted to mineral dressing	completed 2002
<b>Armenia</b>	872 tonnes	converted to mineral dressing	completed 2007
<b>Montenegro</b> <i>(joint project UNDP-OSCE)</i>	128 tonnes	transported to industrial facilities in Sweden and disposed of by incineration	completed 2008
<b>Albania</b>	34 tonnes	transported to industrial facilities in Sweden and disposed of by incineration	completed 2009
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	410 tonnes	OSCE provided technical advice, expert monitoring and limited financial support	planned
<b>Ukraine</b>	over 16,000 tonnes (initial phase of the project 3,168 tonnes)	transported to industrial facilities in Russia and converted to industrial chemical nitrobenzene	underway

Further reading: *Liquid Rocket Fuel in the OSCE Area: Overview of Disposal Aspects*, prepared by the OSCE Secretariat (2008). Available online in English and Russian.

component. I saw on TV how they were preparing cisterns to be sent away.”

The cisterns the young fish seller saw on television were railway tank cars specially designed for carrying mélange and nitric acid. The tanks cars were transported to chemical plants in Dzerzhinsk, Russia, part of a Russian consortium that won an international tender to process the toxin. At the plants, anti-rust agents are removed from the mélange, and after a complex chemical process, it is just nitric acid that remains. This, in turn, is used to produce the industrial chemical nitrobenzene. Nitrobenzene is widely used in industry to make paint components, explosives for industrial use and certain drugs. The disposal

process ensures that the remains have no military applications.

Before work wrapped up in Kalynivka in mid-January, experts had already begun clearing the next site of mélange almost 400 kilometres to the south-west, near the regional capital of the Ivano-Frankivsk region. Here, 2,000 tonnes of mélange are stored just outside the village of Tsenzliv. Thanks to the OSCE project, this site is expected to be free of the chemical by summer 2010. The first loaded train leaving Tsenzliv travelled via Kalynivka and picked up the final tanks of mélange from there before leaving for Russia. Next in line is a site in Radekhiv, in the densely populated Lviv region in western Ukraine, which holds around 3,000 tonnes of mélange.

When Ukraine’s government approached the OSCE for assistance in ridding itself of the threat posed by mélange, the country had stocks totalling 16,000 tonnes. The 6,000 tonnes that will have been cleared by the end of the year represent a fraction of that, but they are a good start. If enough funds are acquired, the country could be free of the threat in about three years.

That would be high time, says Acting Ukrainian Defence Minister Valeriy Volodymyrovych Ivashchenko: “The number of mélange containers in poor condition increases every year, heightening the risk of a disastrous spill,” he says. “This is why it is crucial that the removal process is rapid.”

The project is set to become the largest OSCE project financed by voluntary contributions. Donors to date include the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Spain, Poland, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, the United States and Ukraine. The budget for stages already carried out and planned is more than €4 million. Fund-raising for later stages is underway, with an estimated €10 million still needed.

The financial requirements are high, particularly considering the economic crisis that has limited participating States’ ability to contribute. But it is money well spent, says OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut: “By helping Ukraine eliminate the threat posed by mélange, the OSCE is doing exactly what it was created to do: increasing security.”

1 Military personnel at the mélange storage site near Kalynivka (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)

2 A boy selling fish at the market in Kalynivka shares what he has heard about the mélange removal project. (OSCE/Susanna Lööf)



Leonid Kalashnyk contributed to this report.

Susanna Lööf is Press and Public Information Officer at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna. Oksana Polyuga is National Programme Co-ordinator for the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Leonid Kalashnyk is Associate Project Officer in the OSCE Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna.



Urgozhainoye village, Simferopol district, March 2007. Margarita Rosohataya teaches conflict resolution skills to 10th-grade students in a school where Crimean Tatars make up 35 to 40 per cent of the whole student population.

ICD/MARGARITA ROSOHATAYA

MAX VAN DER STOEL AWARD 2009

## Building bridges in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood

### Crimean NGO starts them young

by Patricia N. Sutter

It's been half a year since the fourth Max van der Stoel Award was conferred on Ukraine's Integration and Development Centre for Information and Research (IDC), but 42-year-old Oleg Smirnov, whose roots are Ukrainian, Russian and Polish, is still basking in the glow of special recognition.

"Everyone dreams of having their achievements noticed," he says, speaking on behalf of the Crimean NGO that he has been heading for the past eight years. "But this happens rarely, especially when one's mission is as delicate as trying to influence the way majority and minority populations treat one another."

He recalls feeling "somewhat dazed" when he and colleague Margarita Aradzhyni arrived at the headquarters of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in mid-October last year. "One day we were working anonymously in Simferopol getting ready for the new school year in Crimea, and the next day we were delivering remarks to more than a hundred diplomats, Dutch parliamentarians and the Grand Old Man himself, Mr. van der Stoel."

When Frans Timmermans, the Dutch Minister for European Affairs at that time, handed over the prize money of €50,000 on behalf of the Government of the Netherlands, "Margarita and I immediately read each other's thoughts," says Mr. Smirnov. "The funds would make it possible to keep our intercultural education programme going and expand its reach."

Margarita Aradzhyni is the educator behind the centre's "Culture of Good Neighbourhood", a

multidisciplinary course designed for young Crimeans ranging from four to 20 years old. Its growing potential as a tool for sowing the seeds of tolerance and understanding has caught the attention of school authorities in the southern Ukrainian peninsula — and the jury of the Max van der Stoel Award.

"When we introduced the course in 20 schools in 2005, we were concerned about how it would be received," says Ms. Aradzhyni. "Today, the course is offered in about 300 schools and our support base of NGOs, educators, researchers, government officials, and local and international partners is growing. The State and several regions have also incorporated the course into their educational programmes and pay for teacher-training."

As its name implies, the course seeks to open the eyes of young people to the multiple facets of the society they live in. Lectures and activities take pre-schoolers, pupils, students and teachers through the history, culture, languages, literature and religions of local ethnic groups. Spanning 35 hours in an academic year, the course is underpinned by the teaching of conflict resolution skills.

"In one school, up to 95 per cent of teachers from different ethnic backgrounds said that it was the first time that they felt up to the challenge of teaching a multi-ethnic class," Oleg Smirnov said. They now know they have a vital role to play in stemming the rising tide of xenophobia before it develops into direct confrontation and outright violation of people's rights."

But children are also among the most effective teachers of the Integration and Development Centre. "Through them, we are able to reach their parents," Ms. Aradzhyni says. "Our hope is that families start looking at 'the others' who live next door with different eyes and become less distrustful of them."

With more than 125 nationalities and ethnic groups represented in a population of more than 2 million, Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the world. "Scars of injustice run deep and inter-ethnic relations are fraught

with stereotypes and prejudices that go back in time,” said OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek at the award ceremony in The Hague.

“The mass return of Crimean Tatars and other ‘formerly deported persons’ following the disintegration of the Soviet Union caught Ukraine unprepared,” says Mr. Smirnov. “Our newly independent country was grappling with emerging socio-economic threats posed by the transition process, when along came the added burden of responding to the repatriation needs of about 300,000 people. I’m referring to the Armenians, Bulgarians, Crimean Tatars, Greeks and Germans who returned home after having been exiled by the Stalin regime to Central Asia, the Urals and Siberia.”

Statistics from the last Ukraine-wide census, in 2001, indicated that as a percentage of the total Crimean population, Russians made up 58.5 per cent and Ukrainians 24.4 per cent. The proportion of Crimean Tatars was 12.1 per cent, compared with 1.9 per cent in 1989.

To be fair, he adds, “Ukraine has taken many significant steps on the path to a modern, multicultural and democratic society. But officials will be the first to admit that efforts to provide all communities with an equal stake in society still have a long way to go.”

The enormity of the task is not lost on international partners such as the High Commissioner on National Minorities. “This is why we’re on the constant lookout for ways to co-operate with grassroots organizations that are in a position to serve as bridge-builders between communities and help heal scars,” says High Commissioner Vollebaek.

“Not surprisingly, the traditional views of politicians and civil society feed on each other,” says Ms. Aradzhyni, whose heritage is Ukrainian-Italian. “As we criss-cross the Crimean peninsula to conduct training, we are finding that most people are still loathe to accept

the realities of a diverse neighbourhood.” A recent poll has revealed that more than 40 per cent of Crimean youth support the 1944 deportations of Crimean Tatars.

The Integration and Development Centre is unfazed by these grim findings and pins its hopes on the encouraging results of its work. Schools such as the one in the village of Grushevskya, in the resort region of Sudak, are leading the way. Previously, just 14 per cent of the schoolchildren — made up of Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars — had included members of other ethnic groups in their circle of friends. This leaped to almost 80 per cent after they completed the Culture of Good Neighbourhood course.

Meeting shortly after the award ceremony, members of the IDC board discussed how best to use the fresh infusion of funds from the Max van der Stoel Award. “We agreed to do more of the same — but better,” says Ms. Aradzhyni. Plans and activities are afoot to improve the course, broaden its reach to parents, develop more publications and teaching material, conduct more research, offer teachers more practical training and measure the impact of the course through more professional monitoring.

Margarita Aradzhyni is resolute about staying the course. “I know thousands of Crimean parents share the same vision of their children’s future,” she says. “I want nothing more than to have my 10-year-old daughter live in peace and security in this beautiful spot of Ukraine. I want her to see the day when ‘good neighbourliness’ is not just taught in the classrooms but has become a way of life.”

Patricia N. Sutter was the Editor of the OSCE Magazine from 2004 to 2009.



Presentation of the fourth Max van der Stoel Award to the Ukrainian NGO, Integration and Development Centre for Information and Research (IDC), The Hague, 14 October 2009. (left to right) Former Dutch Minister for European Affairs Frans Timmermans, Margarita Aradzhyni (IDC), former HCNM Max van der Stoel, Oleg Smirnov (IDC) and HCNM Knut Vollebaek. (OSCE/Arnaud Roelofs)

### *Ukraine and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)*

The Max van der Stoel Award, which comes with a monetary prize of €50,000, is presented every other year in recognition of “extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE participating States”. Launched by the Netherlands in 2003, it honours a distinguished son, Max van der Stoel, who served as the first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities from 1993 to 2001.

The Crimean peninsula was one of the places most frequently visited by Mr. van der Stoel. In 1994 and 1995, he helped broker an agreement between authorities in Kyiv and Simferopol on the constitutional status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

The current High Commissioner, Knut Vollebaek, has continued this close engagement. In 2009, he visited Ukraine twice, addressing issues concerning the situation in Crimea, the state of education of Russians in Ukraine, and the country’s legal framework for language regulation and minority rights. In July 2009, he presented the findings and recommendations of his education study to the Government. He also hosted a round table in Kyiv on legislation concerning the rights of formerly deported persons.



A voter in the town of Znamianka (Kirovohrad region) casts her ballot in the second round of the Ukrainian presidential election, 7 February 2010. (OSCE/Adam Adamus)

## Presidential election in Ukraine: consolidated progress

by Sarah Crozier

Ukraine's 2010 presidential election was an important test, not just for the candidates competing in a tight contest, but for the election system itself. The 2004 presidential election had been marred by widespread fraud, and the re-run that followed — after the so-called Orange Revolution — saw the OSCE's largest ever deployment of election observers. Against this backdrop, the world was watching closely to see whether this time international standards would be met.

The OSCE's efforts to support Ukraine in conducting fully democratic elections involved the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Parliamentary Assembly (PA).

Work began well ahead of the election, which was held in two rounds, on 17 January and 7 February. A large-scale technical assistance project carried out by the PCU in 2009 helped the Central Election

Commission to create an electronic state vote register and trained some 2,280 officials of more than 750 voter registration bodies across the country. In co-operation with the Central Election Commission, the PCU also trained 2,600 district and 90,000 precinct election commission members on various election procedures.

Also contributing its technical assistance, ODIHR jointly published with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission a review of Ukraine's presidential election law, which pointed out some positive aspects, but also significant shortcomings of the amendments adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament last July.

After meeting with the main stakeholders to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for elections in September, ODIHR opened a long-term election observation mission, headed by Swiss diplomat Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, in Kyiv in late November, with 23 experts in the capital and 60 long-term observers deployed throughout Ukraine. They were joined for both rounds of the election by more than 400 short-term observers seconded to ODIHR from participating States, as well as delegations from the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and NATO, and from the European Parliament, bringing the total number of observers to more than 600 from 45 OSCE participating States. OSCE PA President Joao Soares was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator to lead the OSCE short-term observers.

Eighteen candidates ran in the first round with a run-off between rivals Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich three weeks later.

The focus, as always for observers, was not the result, but the process. In its preliminary statements after both rounds, the observer mission concluded that the election met "most" international commitments.

"This election consolidated progress achieved since 2004," said the mission in its 8 February statement. "The lack of confidence and the deficient legal framework were at the root of most problems encountered during this election, and constitute an immediate challenge for the new leadership. The professional, transparent and honest voting and counting should serve as a solid foundation for a peaceful transition of power." One recommendation was for a unified election code to be adopted before holding the next elections, and it was "inappropriate" for the election law to have been amended between the two rounds.

Election day is not the end of the process. As Ukraine's new President Viktor Yanukovich was sworn in, the ODIHR mission continued to follow post-election developments on the ground, and has already issued an interim post-election report, with a final report to follow. The final report will contain recommendations for further improving election processes, and can form the basis of future OSCE election-related support to Ukraine, at the country's request.

Sarah Crozier is Web Editor at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna.

# Australia: Finding resonance with the OSCE

by Foreign Minister Stephen Smith

**W**e greatly appreciate the welcome Australia has received as the OSCE's newest Asian Partner for Co-operation. Our strengthened links with the Organization reflect our commitment to reinvigorate our engagement with multilateral organizations and the development of democratic values, good governance and international security.

More than ever, global challenges such as disarmament and development need effective global solutions arrived at through regional and multilateral forums. Australia has therefore placed the multilateral system at the centre of its foreign policy.

This is reflected, for example, in the active role we have taken in securing progress towards nuclear disarmament, especially through establishing — jointly with Japan — the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. This policy is also reflected in our decision to put ourselves forward to serve on the United Nations Security Council for the 2013-2014 term. And it is reflected in our desire to contribute to the work of the OSCE.

In its own region, Australia seeks to build dialogue and foster a culture of deeper collaboration and transparency as far as security issues are concerned. We believe that countries benefiting from stable security environments must also share the responsibility of supporting peace and stability more broadly. It is in developing this culture of co-operation where we find resonance with the OSCE's approach to security.

Australia welcomes the Organization's strong emphasis on promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and the principles of democracy. We respect the



AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

OSCE's perseverance in resolving long-term disputes and its efforts against transnational crime, including trafficking in persons. We also recognize the role played by the OSCE in Afghanistan, where Australia is the largest non-NATO contributor to the International Security Assistance Force.

Australia brings its own experience and expertise to its partnership with the OSCE. We have a strong history in peace-keeping. We have led reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction efforts of our near-neighbours, including Solomon Islands, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and East Timor. We have also co-sponsored a successful series of regional inter-faith dialogues with our Asian neighbours, the most recent of which was held in Perth in 2009, and we have a strong and resilient culture of domestic community harmony.

With Indonesia, we initiated the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Human Trafficking and Transnational Crime, now involving over 60 countries and 11 international organizations. Key activities include developing model legislation, sharing best practices in law enforcement, identity determination, electronic documentation exchange and public awareness campaigns.

As the OSCE's newest Partner for Co-operation, we will make a constructive and practical contribution to the Organization's comprehensive and co-operative approach to security. Michael Potts, Australia's ambassador in Vienna, and Brendan Nelson, our ambassador in Brussels, will take forward our new engagement. We look forward to working with the OSCE to develop common approaches to the pressing challenges that span borders and threaten global peace and security.

Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith paid an official visit to the OSCE on 17 February 2010, shortly after the Ministerial Council granted his country the status of Partner for Co-operation. He contributed this commentary to the *OSCE Magazine*.

## *Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation*

Algeria  
Egypt  
Israel  
Jordan  
Morocco  
Tunisia

## *Asian Partners for Co-operation*

Afghanistan  
Australia  
Japan  
Korea (Republic of)  
Mongolia  
Thailand



OSCE

**Dunja Mijatović** assumed the position of **OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media** on 11 March 2010. She brings with her extensive knowledge and experience in legal and regulatory frameworks for media in transition and in conflict and post-conflict societies, as well as in protecting freedom of expression in new media and the information society. From March 2001 she was Director of Broadcasting at the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2007, she was elected

Chairperson of the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA), the largest media network in the world.

**Maria Grazia Giammarinaro** of Italy took up her post as **Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** on 1 March 2010, succeeding Eva Biaudet of Finland. She comes to the OSCE from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security, where she was principal adviser for the fight against human trafficking, sexual exploitation of children and penal aspects of illegal migration from 2006 to 2009. Giammarinaro has been a judge in the Criminal Court of Rome since 1991. From 1996 to 2001, she served as Head of the Legislative Office and Adviser to the Minister for Equal Opportunities.



OSCE/SUSANNA LOOF

**Benedikt Haller** of Germany assumed the position of **Head of the OSCE Office in Minsk** on 15 January 2010. Since 2006, he had been



OSCE/FRANZ MORENBESSE

serving as Ambassador-at-Large and Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organizations in the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. Prior to this, he was an exchange diplomat at the French Foreign Ministry in Paris, co-ordinating French activities within the OSCE framework. From 1999 to 2003, he was Deputy Head of the division in the Federal Foreign Office responsible for OSCE and Council of Europe affairs. Overseas postings have included Paris, Washington, D.C., Port-of-Spain, Moscow and Athens. Ambassador Haller succeeds German diplomat Hans Jochen Schmidt.



OSCE/SUSANNA LOOF

**Virginie Coulloudon** assumed the position of **OSCE Spokesperson and Head of the Press and Public Information Section of the Office of the Secretary General** on 1 February 2010, taking over from Martin Nesirky. She joined the OSCE in January 2007 as Deputy Spokesperson. Prior to this, she worked at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty as Director of Communications for Europe. She also was Research Director at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, and worked as a permanent correspondent for French media in Moscow between 1990 and 1996.

## OSCE Secretary General receives Order of the Lion of Finland



OSCE/JONNY PERFECT

Ambassador Antti Turunen and his wife, Kirsti Turunen, present SG Marc Perrin de Brichambaut with the award.

OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut was decorated with the Commander of the Order of the Lion of Finland at a ceremony held in Vienna on 10 December 2009. "This Order is a token of the deep appreciation of the Government of Finland to the important work of the Secretariat and the personal engagement of Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut," said Finnish Ambassador Antti Turunen, who presented the award.

Ambassador Turunen, who has recently been appointed United Nations Representative (Co-Chair of the international Geneva Discussions), presided over the OSCE Permanent Council during the Finnish Chairmanship in 2008. The OSCE's work that year was marked by the difficult challenge of addressing the August 2008 conflict and the crisis in Georgia.

"The OSCE Chairmanship cannot succeed without support from the Secretariat and institutions," Turunen remarked. "I belong to those who would like to see the role of the Secretariat enhanced further within the OSCE as a key provider of policy advice and institutional memory. The ongoing Corfu Process provides an excellent opportunity to address also this issue."

Accepting the award, Perrin de Brichambaut underlined the important role played by all OSCE staff, including in challenging circumstances such as those faced by the OSCE Mission to Georgia. "The challenges could not have been met without the hard work and extraordinary dedication of staff members, both in the Secretariat and in the field. The personal engagement of all OSCE staff is inspiring. They are the lifeblood of the Organization, taking forward ambitious mandates patiently and professionally, and for which the participating States are rightfully grateful," he said.

The Order of the Lion of Finland was founded in 1942 and is awarded for civilian and military merit.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.



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