



the MAX VANDER STOEL award
2014

2014 Programme
&
2011 Commemoration

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&
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Max van der Stoep, first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, 1992–2001

Max van der Stoel

Max van der Stoel was appointed as the first High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE HCNM) in 1992. He served an unprecedented eight and a half years in this post. Born in 1924, van der Stoel was a senior statesman who had a long and distinguished career. As well as being Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands twice (1973–1977 and 1981–1982), he held seats in both the upper and lower houses of the Dutch Parliament. He was also a member of the European Parliament (1971–1973) and the North Atlantic Assembly (1968–1973, 1978–1981) as well as the Council of Europe Consultative Assembly and the Western European Union Assembly between 1967 and 1972. Between 1983 and 1986, he served as Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations and in 1991, he was awarded the honorary title of Minister of State by Queen Beatrix for his exceptional accomplishments. The following year, he was appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights as Special Rapporteur on Iraq.

Van der Stoel became familiar with the work of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE later OSCE) in his roles as Foreign Minister during the Helsinki consultations from 1973 to 1975, as Chairman of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee for several years and as the Netherlands head of delegation during the CSCE conferences on the human dimension in Paris, Copenhagen and Moscow. After several renewals of his mandate as OSCE HCNM, he was succeeded by Swedish diplomat Mr. Rolf Ekéus in July 2001.

In 1999, van der Stoel was awarded the Order of the Golden Lion of Nassau. He was the first citizen of the Netherlands to receive the award since 1919. Several honorary doctorates have also been awarded to him, including the Cleveringa Chair at Leiden University. The Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award at the University of Tilburg is named in his honour.

Max van der Stoel Award

The Award of €50,000, named in honour of Mr. Max van der Stoel – a prominent Dutch statesman and the first to hold the position of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities – was established by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001. It is awarded biennially¹ to an individual or an institution in recognition of extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE participating States.



Award Winners

- 2014 Spravedlivost, Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan
- 2011 Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje
- 2009 Integration and Development Center for Information and Research, Crimea, Ukraine
- 2007 European Roma Rights Centre, Budapest, Hungary
- 2005 Memorial Historical, Educational, Human Rights and Charitable Society, Moscow, Russian Federation
- 2003 Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, Riga, Latvia

¹ The 2013 Award was postponed to 2014 to avoid overlapping with the change in HCNM.

Foreword
by Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner
on National Minorities

It is with great pleasure that I host the ceremony to present the Max van der Stoel Award to Spravedlivost, a human rights organization based in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan. The Max van der Stoel Award is a generous gift of €50,000, provided by the Government of the Netherlands to recognize and reward individuals or organizations that have contributed to improving the position of minorities in the OSCE area. The laureates are selected by a distinguished jury, to which I am grateful for its efforts.

Ms. Valentina Gritsenko, Director of Spravedlivost, and Mr. Utkir Dzhabbarov, Senior Lawyer, have travelled to The Hague for this important day, as have many other special guests, including representatives of the Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje, the previous Award recipients.

The High Commissioner on National Minorities has been actively engaged in Kyrgyzstan for many years. This engagement intensified as inter-ethnic tensions increased significantly in 2009 and 2010. Unfortunately, the situation continued to spiral downward and violent clashes broke out in the city of Osh. On that occasion my predecessor, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, issued the second formal early warning in the history of the Institution, calling on OSCE participating States to help stabilize the situation in southern Kyrgyzstan and to assist Uzbekistan in managing the resulting refugee flows. However, violence continued in and around the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad. More than four hundred people were killed and many more were injured and displaced.

Since these events, building conditions for sustaining peace and reconciliation in Kyrgyzstan has been a long and difficult process. Spravedlivost has made a valuable contribution to this process.

In its 20 years of existence, Spravedlivost has earned a strong reputation for its work advocating and defending human rights in southern Kyrgyzstan. Since the 2010 events, the work of Spravedlivost has assumed even greater relevance, as well as risk. The jury wrote in its justification: "During the 2010 events in Osh and in the region, and their aftermath, Spravedlivost took a vocal and active lead in supporting the victims, and provided free legal assistance to ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks accused of involvement in inter-ethnic violence. The multi-ethnic staff has proven to be courageous, especially when facing threats and

harassment due to the organization's efforts to promote impartial justice in the tense environment of southern Kyrgyzstan."

Rule of law and access to justice are building blocks of stable, integrated societies. By providing legal assistance across ethnic lines, by advocating for laws, policies and practices that are consistent with human rights principles, Spravedlivost contributes to long-term conflict prevention in Kyrgyzstan. They do this by working toward a more just and equitable society. "Spravedlivost" means justice, fairness, truth. And they live up to their name.

Kyrgyzstan was one of the first countries I visited as High Commissioner. It is still struggling with many problems, but I have hope for its future. Much of my optimism comes from people like those at Spravedlivost – committed people who want to see their country become a better place, a safe place for all its diverse communities.

Foreword
by Frans Timmermans, Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

A Silent Force

When I was asked to write this foreword, I did not hesitate for a moment. I hold the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in great esteem.

But more important than my own personal feelings on the matter is the continued global importance of the work of the High Commissioner and her staff. More's the pity, I'm tempted to say: since the role's creation, the successive holders of the office of High Commissioner have done enormous amounts of work – often in silence – but unfortunately, given the state of the world today, the HCNM remains as necessary as ever.

There are many kinds of national minorities within the OSCE region. There are many downtrodden groups, whose plight often impels the High Commissioner to take action. But some of these groups regularly produce brave individuals who speak out against that plight.

The High Commissioner takes action if she believes there are tensions surrounding national minorities that could lead to a conflict. It is work that has been done, in silence, for over 20 years, because this understated style has proven more effective than a lot of fanfare. On the other hand, from time to time the High Commissioner's good work deserves a moment in the limelight. The presentation of the Max van der Stoep Award is such an occasion.

At the same time it is an opportunity to praise other parties as well, since the High Commissioner and her staff cannot do their work alone. To pay tribute to individuals and institutions that provide indispensable support, the Dutch government created the Max van der Stoep Award.

The prize is awarded once every two years to an individual or organization for exceptional work in improving the position of national minorities in an OSCE participating State. Today Spravedlivost from Jalal-Abad in Kyrgyzstan will be added to the list of impressive winners. Congratulations! I hope the prize is a source of support for the organization in its future work.

***Her Excellency Astrid Thors,
the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,
has the honour to invite you to the presentation
ceremony of the Max van der Stoel Award***

*In 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
established an award honouring the first OSCE High Commissioner
on National Minorities, the late Mr. Max van der Stoel.*

*The prize is awarded biennially to a person or institution in
recognition of extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at
improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE area.*

This year the prize will be awarded to

Spravedlivost

*The ceremony will take place on
2 October 2014 at 16:30
in Het Spaansche Hof, Westeinde 12, The Hague.*

2014 Programme

16:00

Registration and refreshments

16:30

Award ceremony:

Music to open the ceremony

Welcoming speech by OSCE High Commissioner
on National Minorities Astrid Thors,
and statement on behalf of the Jury
in her capacity as Chairperson

Short film about the laureate

Presentation speech by His Excellency Frans Timmermans
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Acceptance speech by the laureate

Speech by Mira Karybaeva, Head of Department of Ethnic and
Religious Policy and Co-operation with Civil Society, Kyrgyz
Republic Presidential Administration

Music to close the ceremony

17:30 – 19:00

Reception

Final words by OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
Astrid Thors

About Kyrgyzstan



SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN, OSH REGION. © ERIC GOURLAN

A Central Asian country of incredible natural beauty and proud nomadic traditions, most of Kyrgyzstan was formally annexed to Russia in 1876. Kyrgyzstan became a Soviet republic in 1936 and achieved independence in 1991 when the USSR dissolved.

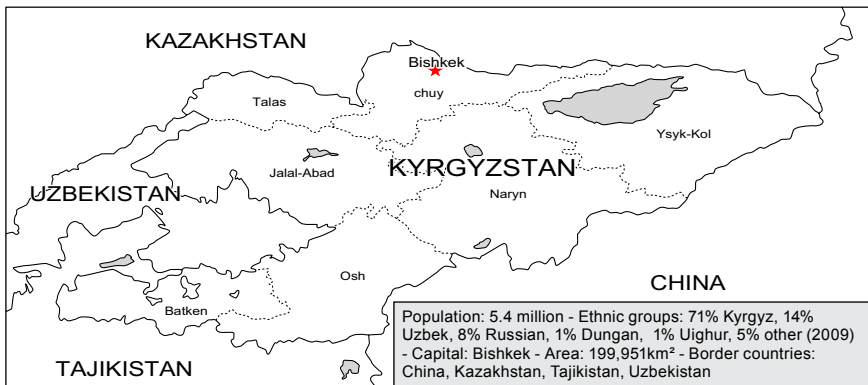
Nationwide demonstrations in the spring of 2005 resulted in the ouster of President Askar Akaev, who had run the country since 1990. Former Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiev overwhelmingly won the presidential election in 2005 but his time was marred by political instability, an almost constant power struggle with parliament and a curtailment of civil liberties.

In April 2010, civil tensions came to a head with Bakiev's ouster. Kyrgyzstan experienced its worst upheaval since independence in 1991, as ethnic violence shook southern Kyrgyzstan in June, killing hundreds, injuring thousands, destroying more than 2,600 homes, and resulting in the temporary mass exodus to Uzbekistan of nearly 100,000 ethnic Uzbeks.

Roza Otunbaeva served as transitional President until Almazbek Atambaev was inaugurated in December 2011, marking the first peaceful transfer of presidential power in independent Kyrgyzstan's history. Continuing concerns include: the trajectory of democratization, lack of good governance and border disputes with neighbouring States.

Timeline

- 1876** Much of present-day Kyrgyzstan annexed to the Russian Empire
- 1936** Kyrgyzstan becomes a Soviet Republic
- June 1990** Inter-ethnic riots in Osh and Uzgen
- 1991** Kyrgyzstan gains independence with the fall of the USSR, Askar Akayev becomes independent Kyrgyzstan's first President
- 1992** Kyrgyzstan joins the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- 2005** Civil uprising forces out Akayev; new government formed under President Kurmanbek Bakiev
- April 2010** Civil uprising breaks out in the north, opposed to the rule of Bakiev; Bakiev flees to Jalal-Abad; former foreign minister Roza Otunbayeva forms a transitional government
- 10 June 2010** Ethnic violence erupts in Osh, followed by Jalal-Abad
- 12 June 2010** OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities issues an early warning to the Permanent Council regarding the situation in Kyrgyzstan, the second such warning in the history of the Institution
- 14 June 2010** Violence subsides. Almost 500 people were killed; thousands injured; hundreds of thousands displaced, both to Uzbekistan and internally; and almost 3,000 properties were damaged. Both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are affected, but the majority of victims are Uzbeks
- 1 December 2011** Almazbek Atambayev is sworn in as President, following elections in November, and Kyrgyzstan experiences its first peaceful transfer of power since independence





Account of 2014 winner's activities

(AT DATE OF PRESENTATION)

Spravedlivost, a not-for-profit non-governmental organization (NGO), was established in 1994. Led by Director Valentina Gritsenko, Spravedlivost focuses on legal solutions to promote and protect human, including minority, rights. Its multi-ethnic staff supports all vulnerable groups, regardless of ethnicity.

Since 2010, when ethnic violence flared in southern Kyrgyzstan, Spravedlivost has been the only NGO providing free legal aid to victims of the events in Jalal-Abad. The majority of victims belong to minorities, particularly ethnic Uzbeks. The NGO continues to support minorities and to speak out against discrimination in a tense environment where its employees are subject to harassment and intimidation.

Spravedlivost is trusted by all ethnic communities and commands respect among the authorities. It works with the authorities to improve the law and on monitoring of temporary detention facilities. It also speaks out against the authorities when it discovers human rights abuses. It has established a network of human rights NGOs that work together to combat discrimination.

The NGO also works to raise the public's awareness of their rights through TV clips and informative brochures. Through its network, it can reach remote communities to provide information and hear complaints. It also organizes seminars and conferences for lawyers and activists on torture and other human rights issues, and on preparing successful cases.

Together with the authorities and other NGOs, it monitors conditions in temporary detention facilities, where some of the worst human rights abuses occur. Since there are no permanent detention facilities in Jalal-Abad Region, suspects are held in temporary detention facilities for months or even years. Such facilities are only intended for a maximum stay of 48 hours, and they lack medical and other facilities. Inmates suffer poor health conditions and are sometimes exposed to police brutality and torture. It is also contributing to improving detention facilities. Together with other NGOs, Spravedlivost provides medical services, records evidence of abuse and encourages victims

to file complaints. It is also working with the authorities and the Red Cross to build permanent detention facilities, which are expected to open by the end of the year. It is hoped that this will have a positive effect on detention conditions in the region.

Spravedlivost was the only NGO in Jalal-Abad to speak out against the recent decision to stop offering final examinations to school leavers in the Uzbek language. This decision has had a demoralizing effect on Uzbek students and compounds multiple challenges faced by minorities in Jalal-Abad.

The NGO also uses its legal and educational activities to improve trust in the authorities, which is extremely low among minorities, especially Uzbeks, due to widespread fears of arbitrary detention and extortion. Many consider themselves to be the victims of targeted discrimination. Impunity in the aftermath of the 2010 events continues to be a serious challenge. Since minority access to the media and decision-making are limited, minorities lack a voice and the influence to make their views heard. Spravedlivost works to combat these issues by uncovering abuse, encouraging victims to speak out and promoting justice. By building trust and raising people's awareness of their rights, victims of discrimination are empowered to speak out and improve their situation. Spravedlivost provides victims of discrimination in Jalal-Abad with the knowledge and the means to combat abuse and build a more trusting, secure and tolerant society.

Spravedlivost: using the law to combat ethnic discrimination

Spravedlivost have been providing legal services to vulnerable groups in Jalal-Abad for 20 years. They are respected by citizens and authorities for their efforts to bring examples of human rights abuses to light. Since June 2010, when ethnic violence flared in southern Kyrgyzstan, their work has been especially difficult. Ethnicity has become politicized in the tense environment, and minorities, especially ethnic Uzbeks, find it hard to protect themselves from discrimination. Although the situation has calmed down, numerous challenges remain, both directly connected to the 2010 events as well as to ongoing inter-ethnic tensions.

In this challenging environment, Spravedlivost’s staff often find themselves the target of intimidation for their work to protect victims of abuse and to help the authorities to find solutions to the systemic and legal challenges they face.

Supporting the most vulnerable groups

For their clients, Spravedlivost provide an essential service to help them understand their rights and combat discrimination. Guljan Kudratova* an ethnic



*A CLIENT** VISITS SPRAVEDLIVOST’S OFFICE IN JALAL-ABAD CITY (OSCE/ERIC GOURLAN)*

* Names of victims have been changed to protect the victims’ identities

** Posed by an actress

Uzbek, lost her market stall and sole source of income due to discrimination. She says: “When you find yourself in such a situation, you just can’t think. You are completely in the dark and have no idea what to do. Spravedlivost gives you a map to find your way. People just don’t have this knowledge. This is why Spravedlivost is essential for victims of discrimination in Jalal-Abad.”

A key issue is that the police are expected to secure convictions related to the 2010 events, yet face daunting challenges in terms of limited capacity and funding. Many police officers are insufficiently trained in investigative skills, contributing to a climate where arbitrary arrest and confessions extracted under torture sometimes occur.

Rustam Islamov* explains, “I was accused of murder and detained without cause for two days. Spravedlivost got me out of the detention facility. Without them, I would probably still be there. I used to have lots of Kyrgyz friends, but after 2010, everything changed. It isn’t safe for Uzbeks anymore. We have no security. The police detain people arbitrarily. I know because it happened to me.”

Low police salaries also foster a situation in which it is possible to pay one’s way out of detention. In some cases, police have been known to detain people simply to extort bribes.

Ethnic Uzbeks are especially at risk of extortion, as they are perceived as being entrepreneurial and having access to plenty of money. With limited employment options, many do run their own businesses and report that excessive extortion is making it all but impossible to survive. Nargiz Khamidova* had a canteen at the market but has decided to leave for Russia, as she feels she can no longer support her family in the current environment. Most recently, an ethnic Kyrgyz woman accused her of breaking her laptop following an altercation.

“The police told me I had to pay \$1,000 compensation. At the police station, the woman was shouting ethnic abuse at me. I didn’t even bother to argue and told the police I would bring the money the following day. It was late and I had to look after my four children. The police insisted I had to pay before they would release me. My relatives managed to find the money and bring it to the police station. It was very difficult for them to find this kind of money.”

Karimberdi Oljabaev, Deputy Head of the Jalal-Abad Regional Prosecutor’s Office Supervisory Department for the Observance of Law by Bodies Conducting

* Names have been changed



FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: VALENTINA GRITSENKO, DIRECTOR; AIRAT ATARBAEV (IT SPECIALIST), NURISLAM RAIMDZANOV (LAWYER) AND FARHOD SHASALIMOV (LAWYER) IN THE SPRAVEDLIVOST OFFICE, JALAL-ABAD. (OSCE/ERIC GOURLAN)

Operational Investigations, says minorities tend to go to Spravedlivost because they have a multi-ethnic staff and a reputation for supporting minorities.

Monitoring detention facilities to combat torture

At Spravedlivost they not only provide legal aid, they also monitor prisons for cases of mistreatment and torture and provide information to raise awareness of human rights in Jalal-Abad region.

Working under a Memorandum of Understanding with the General Prosecutor, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and 13 human rights organizations, they conduct fact-finding and monitoring activities at temporary detention facilities.

Their human rights network operates across the region, educating people about their rights and hearing complaints from all members of society. They hear civil as well as criminal cases and emphasize the principle that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law.

Oljabaev says, “It’s really valuable to me that Spravedlivost are conducting monitoring and are bringing abuses to my attention. They are also doing excellent work in terms of encouraging minorities to file complaints.”

Ibragim Shatmanaliev, Head of the Public Safety Department of the Regional Department of Internal Affairs, adds, “when Spravedlivost brings torture cases to our attention, we investigate and initiate disciplinary procedures if required.”

Spravedlivost’s lawyers travel to villages and hear complaints and inform people about their rights. They print brochures and have made television adverts to promote inter-ethnic understanding.

This is essential in an environment where trust in the authorities is low and knowledge of human rights is limited. Spravedlivost’s lawyers have spoken to victims of police mistreatment who did not know that the law protects them from such abuse. Other members of minorities believe they are being deliberately targeted and that reporting abuses of their rights will only cause more problems for them and their families.

Valentina Gritsenko, Spravedlivost’s Director, says that in the immediate aftermath of the 2010 events, “we couldn’t get the Uzbeks to testify. They were scared to speak out. It has taken four years before they started to speak.”

Educating citizens about their rights

Raising people’s awareness of human rights has a positive effect on police activity. Shatmanaliev explained that as people in Kyrgyzstan become more aware of



UTKIR DHZABBAROV, SPRAVEDLIVOST’S SENIOR LAWYER, MEETS A CLIENT (OSCE/ERIC GOURLAN)

their rights, it is less likely the police will torture suspects because they know victims will file reports and inform NGOs and international organizations.

However, as people become more aware of their rights, Spravedlivost is receiving more clients. Utkir Dhabbarov, Spravedlivost's Senior Lawyer, says the caseloads are pretty heavy and their capacity is stretched. "Some more lawyers would help us handle the current cases and expand our work."

Not everyone agrees with the work Spravedlivost is doing. Their lawyers and other staff have been exposed to scrutiny and harassment from mobs intending to disrupt and influence court hearings and the Kyrgyzstan National Security Committee. The international community has repeatedly called for lawyers to be protected to do their work free from harassment. Yet they still experience sustained pressure from the security services.

Dhabbarov says, "This is a high-risk job. Our security is always being threatened, especially those lawyers who are also from an ethnic minority."

Gritsenko explains, "It was terrible when our lawyers were being intimidated in 2010. Our office and our lawyers were targeted. mobs threatened to kill us and to burn down our office. Our head of legal reception was attacked outside the office."

Tensions can be high during some court hearings, which affects everyone involved, including the judges: Akram Tashtemirov, Judge at Jalal-Abad Regional Court, says, "We rely on ourselves. There is no security provided. However, when we hear cases involving ethnic tensions, we ask and the police normally do respond positively to our request for protection."

However, it is not enough to teach people that their rights are being abused. If minorities continue to feel that the police are targeting them, this will breed resentment.

Gritsenko says, "Impunity is a problem. No ethnic Kyrgyz were prosecuted in Jalal-Abad. Uzbeks remain afraid to seek justice. There is no trust in the authorities.

It is interesting to note that the previous inter-ethnic violence took place over 20 years ago in 1990. People harbour resentments. The next generation will hear about the violence from their parents, about how justice was not served. I don't know what will spark the next conflict, but if impunity is not addressed, people will take that opportunity to seek revenge."

Official justification of the International Jury of the Max van der Stoep Award

The grounds on which the 2014 Award was made

Spravedlivost is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that was established in 1994 and is based in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan. It is widely respected for its activities to promote human rights in Kyrgyzstan. Spravedlivost has worked for many years on issues related to the protection of the most vulnerable groups, including national minorities.

The organization has developed a network of likeminded NGOs to monitor serious human rights violations and provide legal support for victims of torture. The organization has for many years proven to be professional, making a considerable contribution to the protection of ethnic Uzbek and other communities and to reconciliation between communities in Kyrgyzstan.

Spravedlivost has worked to monitor conditions and counter torture and ill-treatment in places of detention – police custody, pre-trial detention facilities and prisons – in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken. Through its network, it also provides medical doctors who assist detainees and detect torture at an early stage.

Spravedlivost is also very outspoken with the authorities, advocating for reforms in the criminal justice system. For example, during the 2010 events in Osh and in the region, and their aftermath, Spravedlivost took a vocal and active lead in supporting the victims, and provided free legal assistance to ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks accused of involvement in inter-ethnic violence.

Spravedlivost is led by Valentina Gritsenko. The multi-ethnic staff has proven to be courageous, especially when facing threats and harassment due to the organization's efforts to promote impartial justice in the tense environment of southern Kyrgyzstan.



2011

2011 Commemoration 'Integration at the grass-roots' – the Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje three years on

When Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje (NDC Skopje) in 2011 became the fifth winner of the Max van der Stoel Award, the jury noted that it had “taken up the challenging task of bringing together students, parents and teachers in an area that has been affected by the 2001 conflict and is characterized by great ethnic divisions.” Its integrated bilingual schools are models for promoting respect for diversity, bilingualism and harmonious relations between teachers, pupils and their parents from different ethnic backgrounds.

Three years on NDC Skopje’s Executive Director Sasho Stojkovski, Project Manager Veton Zekoli and Training Centre Manager Biljana Krsteska-Papic say that the separation of society along ethnic lines has continued to widen. This is especially so in schools, they say, where the next generation are being brought up in mono-ethnic environments where stereotypes and prejudice thrive.

Divided society

Stojkovski says that one of the main challenges has been a lack of sustained government commitment at the central level. “Since 2008, there have been no changes at the political or governmental level regarding integrated education. In six years, there have been four Education Ministers.”

Zekoli adds that a lack of political will to overcome the separation is felt at all levels of society. “We live in a highly politicized society and politics easily dominate the environment in schools and neighbourhoods. Most inter-ethnic incidents start in multi-ethnic schools. Some are fabricated and others are not, but the effect is the same: parents are choosing to send their children to mono-ethnic schools because the authorities are passive.”

Of the few inter-ethnic schools that do exist, they exist only in name because in reality pupils from different communities are often segregated, notes Krsteska-Papic. She points to examples where one school can have “two managements, two names, two separate buildings, or even one school building with two or three ethnic shifts, separated and divided physically on different floors within the same facility.”

One of the consequences of thorough ethnic separation in schools is inter-ethnic tension.

“The lack of communication, co-operation and integration between the students from different ethnic backgrounds leads towards stereotypes and prejudices, which will result in hatred and incidents on the streets,” Zekoli explains.

“Integration is not a two-day seminar or a field trip,” he says, stressing the need for more long-term solutions. “Integration in our schools is celebrating birthdays together, spending every day together, working on different project ideas together, organizing school performances together, spending lunch time together, and introducing the school to the parents and the community.”

Stojkovski laments that the reconciliation process was understood simply as the “rebuilding of damaged properties and goods, and nurturing of the displaced persons.” He adds that while the Ohrid Framework Agreement was considered a solution to all the issues and consequences of the conflict, no real efforts were made to rebuild the bridges between communities that had been affected by the war. “Not enough efforts are being made towards dialogue.”

Communities search for solutions

In contrast to the political level, Stojkovski says that communities are searching for solutions at the grass-roots level, with initiatives to introduce integrated education in new schools now coming from teachers and school directors who have heard about integrated education. “They contact us, inform the mayors and set up new collaboration initiatives between the municipality and the school.”

NDC Skopje is also expanding. Currently operating seven schools in six municipalities, this month it is opening six new schools in an additional three municipalities. It is also training more teachers to provide integrated education.

Stojkovski hopes that with NDC Skopje branching into more schools, they will get more attention, not only at the grass-roots level but also at the government level. “We hope the authorities will see that our schools are supported by the students, teachers, parents and mayors, and that they demonstrate results.”

Winning the Max van der Stoel Award brought international and local attention to NDC Skopje’s mission and work. “It also boosted morale among staff who have faced strong opposition in the past,” says Zekolli. “There were many sceptics and groups that did not believe in our work, but the Award proved them wrong.”

Account of 2011 Award Winner's activities

(AT DATE OF PRESENTATION)

Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje (NDC Skopje) is a non-governmental organization that supports intercultural and inter ethnic dialogue, with the aim of contributing to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace-building. Established in 2000 and supported by the Nansen Academy, Lillehammer, Norway, NDC Skopje facilitates the integration of society through education and other activities.

Since the conflict ended with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) in 2001, NDC Skopje has focused on working with young people from different communities in the areas most affected by the conflict. It was awarded the Max van der Stoel Award for its outstanding work to promote integrated education and improve co-operation between different ethnic communities.



THE WINNERS OF THE MAX VAN DER STOEL AWARD 2011 WITH THE MACEDONIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS, NIKOLA DIMITROV (L) AND OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES KNUT VOLLEBAEK (FAR RIGHT). THE NANSEN DIALOGUE NETWORK AND NANSEN DIALOGUE CENTRE SKOPJE REPRESENTATIVES, FROM 2ND LEFT: MIRLINDA ALEMDAR, BILJANA KRSTEVSKA-PAPIC, VETON ZEKOLI, BENTE KNAGENHJELM, SASHO STOJKOVSKI, IVANA MILAS AND ANGEL VIDAL-ALONSO. (OSCE/ARNAUD ROELOFSZ)

One example is NDC Skopje's programme to foster "Dialogue and Reconciliation" in the Municipality of Jegunovce in the northwest of the country. This area was badly affected by the conflict and continues to feel the effects of ethnic separation.

NDC Skopje aims to counteract the effects that ethnic separation in schools is having on inter-ethnic relations by organizing extra-curricular activities in which pupils from different ethnic groups are able to learn together in the same classroom using their mother tongues. The primary school in Jegunovce opened in 2008, offering one grade. At the same time, NDC Skopje worked on building constructive co-operation between parents of different ethnic backgrounds. As a result, demand for the NDC model of integrated classroom increased, and grades were added to meet demand. The pupils are encouraged to hang out together, breaking down stereotypes and building respect.

NDC's mission is to support actively and effectively intercultural and inter-ethnic dialogue processes at local, national and regional levels with the aim of contributing to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peace building through various programme activities, in particular within the educational area.

NDC Skopje is part of the Nansen Dialogue Network that consists of Nansen Dialogue Centers in the Western Balkans and the Nansen Academy in Norway. Nansen Dialogue Network is a member of the European Peace Building Liaison Office.

The grounds on which the 2011 Award was made

The International Jury of the Max van der Stoel Award has decided to give its 2011 award to the Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje (NDC Skopje) for its outstanding work to promote integrated education and improve co-operation between different ethnic communities.

The NDC Skopje, established in 2000, is part of the Nansen Dialogue Network, which supports intercultural and inter-ethnic dialogue with the aim of preventing conflict, fostering reconciliation and building peace. In particular, it has taken up the challenging task of bringing together students, parents and teachers in an area that has been affected by the 2001 conflict and is characterized by great ethnic divisions.

Through its relentless efforts and innovative projects, NDC Skopje has provided further evidence of the positive role that education can play in defusing inter-ethnic tensions and integrating society. Its integrated bilingual schools are models for promoting respect for diversity, bilingualism and harmonious relations between teachers, pupils and their parents from different ethnic backgrounds.

In many regards, NDC Skopje has continued the important legacy left by the late Max van der Stoel in the country. The work it has accomplished is a great source of inspiration for all those committed to bridging the ethnic divide in post-conflict environments. It is also an asset for the authorities' pledge to promote further integration in schools, including through its recently adopted Strategy on Integrated Education.

Members of the Jury

Anastasia Crickley

Head of Department of Applied Social Studies
National University of Ireland Maynooth

Anastasia Crickley is Vice President of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and a founder of the European Network against Racism. She has long been involved in work with Travellers and Roma in Ireland and Europe. She is co-founder and Chair of Pavee Point (the National Travelers and Roma Centre) and co-founder of the Migrant Rights Centre. She was member of the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention on National Minorities of the Council of Europe, and Chairperson of the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency.

Emil Pain

Director
Centre for Ethnopolitical and Regional Studies, Moscow

Emil Pain is Professor of Political Science at the Higher School of Economics, Moscow. He founded the Center for Ethnopolitical and Regional Studies and became its director. He was a member of the Social Council under Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and participated in informal negotiations with Chechen insurgents in The Hague. He served as chief of the Advisory Panel on peaceful settlement of the crisis in Chechnya, and as advisor on ethnopolitical issues to President Yeltsin. He was a member of the Human Rights Council under President Dmitry Medvedev.

Louise Arbour

Counsel
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, Montréal, Canada

The Honourable Louise Arbour is a counsel at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Madam Arbour sat as a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, 1999 to 2004. She was also the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights, and is a member of the Global Commission on Drug Policy. Madam Arbour has been a Companion of the Order of Canada since 2007 and a Grand Officer of the Ordre national du Québec since 2009, as well as a Commander of the Légion d'honneur.

Nataša Kandić

Humanitarian Law Center, Belgrade

Nataša Kandić is the founder of the Humanitarian Law Center (Serbia, 1992) and was the Executive Director of the Humanitarian Law Center until 2012. She is currently the Co-ordinator of the RECOM Process/Human Losses in the Wars in the Former Yugoslavia. She has received 26 human rights awards and acknowledgements for her persistent and fearless work on documenting war crimes and the most serious human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia.

Wilco de Jonge

Director Human Rights Policy
Amnesty International, Amsterdam

Wilco de Jonge is a political scientist. He was a lecturer at Utrecht University, director of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Programme Co-ordinator of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Director of the Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad (Interchurch Peace Council, now IKV Pax Christi), and Director of Press Now (now Free Press Unlimited). He joined the Dutch section of Amnesty International in January 2009 as Director of Human Rights Policy. He is also active as Treasurer of The Foundation for Peace Sciences.

Rules of Procedure

Max van der Stoel Award

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Max van der Stoel Award will be presented in recognition of extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities in the OSCE area. It will be awarded to international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, government bodies or individuals with a record of excellence in this field.
- 1.2 The Award shall be presented every two years.
- 1.3 The Award shall consist of a cash sum of €50,000 and a certificate.
- 1.4 Award winners must indicate in advance how they wish to receive the cash award.
- 1.5 Award winners may spend the cash award as they deem appropriate. No restrictions may be imposed in this respect.

2. MANAGEMENT

The management of the Award will be executed by the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (OSCE HCNM) in The Hague.

3. THE JURY

- 3.1 The HCNM will be responsible for the constitution of the Jury.
 - 3.2 Members of the Jury shall be appointed for a maximum period of three terms leading to the presentation of the Award. When selecting candidates for the Jury, preference shall be given to persons with an international reputation for their work on behalf of national minorities and European security policy in relation to national minorities.
 - 3.3 If a member of the Jury has a hierarchical or comparable relationship with a prospective Award winner (e.g. is on the board or the supervisory council of a legal entity or is a relative or partner of a natural person), the Jury member in question shall not take part in compiling the list of five nominees for the Award. If, at the deadline for nomination, a relationship of this kind exists between more than two members of the Jury and prospective Award winners, the Jury shall be dissolved for one year. A new Jury shall be appointed for a period of eight months, consisting of the uncontested members of the previous Juries and the reserve members next in line on the reserve list, subject to the rules set out above concerning hierarchical or comparable relationships.
 - 3.4 The Jury shall formulate, in writing, the grounds on which the Award is given.
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4. NOMINATIONS

4.1 Nominations for Award winners shall be submitted to the Jury by:

- a) The OSCE Missions and Institutions;
- b) the OSCE participating States through their Permanent Representations with the OSCE in Vienna;
- c) and the OSCE HCNM in The Hague.

4.2 The Award may not be shared.

5. AWARD CEREMONY

5.1 The Award shall be presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the HCNM. The Minister shall incorporate in his speech the grounds for the Award, as formulated by the Jury.

5.2 Two representatives of the winning organization, or, if the winner is a natural person, the winner and one other person, shall be entitled to travelling expenses to The Hague and hotel accommodation for three nights, and shall receive the equivalent of the UN daily subsistence allowance (DSA). An extra allowance shall be granted if hotel bed and breakfast rates exceed 50 per cent of the UN DSA rate.

5.3 In consultation with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the HCNM shall produce the certificate and a book for all guests present on those occasions.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

The HCNM shall submit biennial reports to the Security and Defence Policy Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for approval by the Ministry's Financial and Economic Affairs Department. Both the Ministry's internal and external accountants shall be authorized to inspect and comment on the reports.

