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AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

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## I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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