

# Annual Report 2020





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OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, Vienna, 3 March 2021. (OSCE/Renaud Cuny)

# Message from the Secretary General

The year 2020 was enormously challenging for the OSCE and the wider international community.

Just a year ago, few would have predicted the serious impact that COVID-19 would have on global health and the livelihood of millions of people. It has intensified inequalities, fed distrust, and made our already difficult security environment more unstable and unpredictable.

OSCE activities and our efforts to prevent and manage conflict have also been affected by the pandemic, but as numerous examples in this report show, our Organization has been able to continue fulfilling its mandates while ensuring duty of care to our staff. Even in lockdown phases, OSCE decision-making bodies continued meeting and our field operations and Institutions continued to support our participating States, including in crisis settings where the OSCE plays a critical role.

The OSCE's adaptability and flexibility in the face of COVID-19 are the shared achievement of OSCE staff across our Organization. I thank them for their exceptional commitment. I also wish to thank the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship for ably steering our Organization through an extraordinarily challenging year, and to recognize the professional leadership of my predecessor, Secretary General Thomas Greminger, and Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä as Officer in Charge during a very difficult period.

Since taking up my post, I have been deeply impressed by how much good work the OSCE does every day. I will do my utmost to promote OSCE principles and commitments, all dimensions of our comprehensive approach to security, and problem-solving through dialogue and co-operation. I will work hard to build support for the OSCE's important role in strengthening security and stability in our region, develop more coherent cross-dimensional responses to overcome increasingly complex security challenges and raise the OSCE's profile.

I will promote closer co-operation with our Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, and with the United Nations and other key international and regional organizations. I will strive to ensure that the OSCE makes further progress towards greater diversity and equal representation between men and women across all levels of the Organization. I will also ensure that the OSCE maintains its vibrant engagement with civil society and with young people.

I am immensely proud to work for the OSCE. There is no other security organization in our region with so much potential to bridge differences, to rebuild trust, and to help reduce tensions.

We have every reason to be ambitious, and to work together toward concrete outcomes that will strengthen security for us all.



Helga Maria Schmid  
OSCE Secretary General  
Vienna, 2021



## CHAIRMANSHIP

The OSCE Chairmanship is selected by the OSCE Ministerial Council for a one-year term. The post of Chairperson-in-Office is held by the foreign minister of the selected participating State.

# Overcoming Adversity

Chairperson-in-Office: Edi Rama  
[www.osce.org/chairmanship](http://www.osce.org/chairmanship)

**The Albanian Chairmanship year was momentous for the OSCE in many respects. The year 2020 marked the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, but it was also characterized by a series of new and unprecedented challenges.**

Albania opened the year by noting that, as a small state that has undergone a major transition, it had drawn outsized strength and stability from being part of this values-based security community. Through the Chairmanship, it sought to give back to the Organization. The programme set by the Albanian OSCE 2020 Chairmanship was based on three key objectives:

- Making a difference on the ground;
- Implementing our commitments together;
- Building stability through dialogue.

The Chairmanship prioritized key issues that the OSCE community continues to face: be it military confrontation, the malign use of information and communication technology, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, violent extremism and radicalization, gender equality or the blurred line between state and non-state activity.

But 2020 will be best remembered for other unpredicted developments, including the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, which posed new tests for our governments, communities and the work of the Organization, including the mid-year leadership vacuum in the OSCE executive structures, the situation in Belarus following the presidential election and the outburst of heavy fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh context. These events placed new pressures on the daily work of the OSCE throughout 2020, which the Chairmanship endeavoured to overcome.

In the face of this adversity, the Albanian Chairmanship effectively delivered a suite of new deliverables, maintained the OSCE's operational activities amid the disruption caused by COVID-19 and appointed new management for the Organization.



OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama and OSCE SMM's Chief Monitor Yaşar Halit Çevik in Stanytsia Luhanska, 21 January 2020.  
(OSCE/Evgeniy Maloletka)

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND

The OSCE has proven its ability to make a difference on the ground, be it through engaging in all levels of the conflict cycle, observing elections or supporting reforms. The Albanian Chairmanship aimed to promote the work of the OSCE where it is closest to the people.

The Chairmanship upheld its priority of supporting conflict resolution efforts with respect to Ukraine. The timely extension of the mandate and adoption of the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) budget in March, the first major negotiation accomplished by the Chairmanship, led to a landmark 8 per cent budget increase. By forging consensus around a solid budget for the OSCE's flagship operation, especially amid the pandemic, Albania held true to its commitment to support the work of some 1,300 OSCE staff on the ground. The additional resources, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), bolstered remote monitoring, as there was a partial staff reduction during the pandemic; this was a critical enabling factor in the SMM's monitoring and reporting capabilities in eastern Ukraine.

The Chairmanship supported the Special Representative in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) and the overall TCG process, including by helping to unlock critical situations. The Chairmanship reintroduced the practice of convening informal briefings by TCG Working Group co-ordinators, which was much appreciated by the delegations of the participating States in Vienna.

Seven years into the conflict, 2020 saw an unprecedented and highly needed largely holding ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, after the measures to strengthen it, agreed in the TCG, took effect on 27 July. Some days the SMM recorded no ceasefire violations at all. For almost four months, the SMM registered no civilian casualties or damage to infrastructure from shelling or gunfire. The Chairmanship followed up on the situation and urged compliance with the terms of the ceasefire.

The Chairmanship worked hard politically and practically to find a solution to the restrictions placed on the freedom of movement of SMM staff across the contact line in the spring, which had impeded the fulfilment of the Mission's mandate and put in question the sustainability of the SMM's operations. In early summer, the SMM returned with a substantive presence in non-government-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine. Despite this positive development, remaining restrictions still hamper the Mission's activities.

On Moldova, the Chairmanship, through its Special Representative for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, maintained dialogue between the Sides also during the pandemic and successfully negotiated a ministerial statement supporting the talks at the Ministerial Council (MC) meeting. The Chairmanship also supported the important work of the Mission to Moldova.

The Chairmanship reacted swiftly and publicly to developments in Belarus after the presidential election in August and convened a special meeting of the Permanent Council (PC). The Chairperson-in-Office, together with the incoming 2021 Chair, made an offer to visit Belarus to facilitate dialogue. The Chairmanship's actions highlighted the value of the OSCE as an inclusive organization.

The Chairmanship also prioritized conflict-affected populations in Georgia. Through its Special Representative for the South Caucasus, it facilitated the resumption of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) in Ergneti and convened two meetings, while it was possible to hold only one in-person round of talks in the format of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) in December with the aim to address the security, humanitarian and human rights challenges on the ground in full compliance with the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement. It used its good offices to facilitate communication across the divide concerning the challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the efficient use of water through a shared canal, benefitting communities on both sides. Promoting youth dialogue, the Chairmanship played a leadership role and contributed financially to the OSCE Autumn Academy, and increased regular contact with all stakeholders in the conflict context. It urged progress on long-standing missing persons cases in close co-ordination with local and international stakeholders.

When fighting erupted in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Chairperson-in-Office condemned the violence and urged a return to substantive talks under OSCE auspices. The Chairmanship convened a special PC meeting on 29 September to provide a platform for dialogue and to show the international community's concern about the deteriorating situation on the ground. The Chairmanship ensured that the OSCE executive structures were kept abreast of conflict developments and initiated, with other partners, steps to properly prepare OSCE staff through internal trainings for further engagement in the new situation on the ground.

The Chairmanship maintained open and friendly relations with Central Asia and used an inclusive approach to discuss the current and future of the OSCE's engagement in the region. The Chairmanship paid close attention to the volatile situation in Kyrgyzstan after the October parliamentary elections.

Albania continued to support peace, stability, security and good governance in South-Eastern Europe, including by supporting strong field operations there.

On the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, Albania engaged in a number of high-level political and military dialogues to promote the enhanced implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, including through senior-level participation in the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) and other events. Albania co-championed women, peace and security in the OSCE, including by assuming responsibility as FSC Co-ordinator on UNSCR 1325.



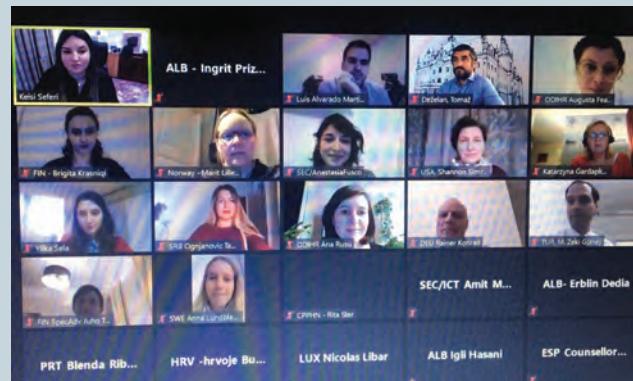
Participants of the 97th Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism meeting, 24 September 2020 (European Union Monitoring Mission)

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chairmanship, with the support of the OSCE Secretariat, ensured the uninterrupted operations of OSCE activities in Vienna and of OSCE field operations throughout the crisis, while paying utmost attention to its duty-of-care obligations towards OSCE staff in the field and at OSCE institutions, as well as participating States' delegates.

Confronted with the first lockdown, not even a single session of the PC was missed, as contingency planning for the transition to remote work was already in place. The Chairmanship also swiftly negotiated a working methodology for remote negotiations and decision-making. This ensured the timely adoption of the Organization's essential administrative and financial instruments, including the Unified Budget, and the appointment of the officers-in-charge for the executive structures. The first meeting in a blended format was held on 9 March; the first online Permanent Council meeting, on 23 April; and the first decision taken by the PC in an online meeting

occurred on 30 April – illustrating the rapid pace of institutional innovation led by the Albanian Chairmanship. A statement recognizing the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our societies was endorsed by 56 participating States.



Albanian Chairmanship online event, 16 December 2020. (OSCE)

## IMPLEMENTING OUR COMMITMENTS TOGETHER

The Albanian Chairmanship was fully committed to ensuring that the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are enjoyed throughout the OSCE region. At the core of its programme, the Albanian Chairmanship considered imperative that all OSCE principles and commitments be met, including those set out in the OSCE Copenhagen Document. Many of our contemporary security challenges will continue for the foreseeable future; others will evolve and new ones will emerge. This requires that participating States reflect on how to employ and adapt OSCE instruments to our changing context, while continuing to protect and promote rights and freedoms.

The Albanian Chairmanship prioritized action to counter gender-based violence with a view to the effective implementation of legislation and action plans that tackle, reduce and ultimately end this unacceptable phenomenon. Also, the Chairmanship effectively mainstreamed gender in all activities, ensuring equal representation in all events and holding a successful online event that produced the "Gender Equality Report Card" marking the anniversary of UNSCR 1325. The Chairmanship adopted a new approach in all its events during 2020: all panels included at least one female speaker.

The Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings and the first annual, mandated and open OSCE conference held in blended format pioneered innovative technical-political solutions adopted for other meetings. While the Organization had to deal with the very difficult decision of not holding the 2020 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, it was critically important for the future to ensure a PC decision acknowledging the year's exceptional circumstances. The Chairmanship expanded a series of webinars with ODIHR and the offices of the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).

The MC decision on prevention and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or

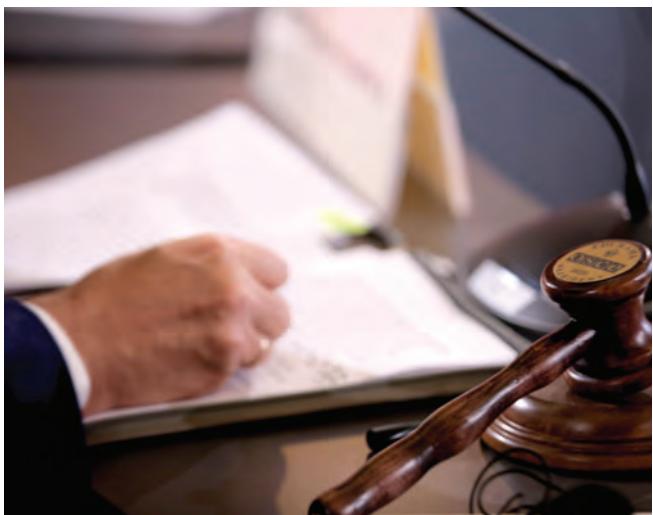
"We have delivered on our ambition to promote gender equality in the OSCE by creating a gender balance in the top jobs. Leading a fully gender-balanced government, which is among the top five in the United Nations in that regard, I am very proud to leave as a mark of my Chairmanship the fully gender-balanced Secretariat of the OSCE. With Ann Linde as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Helga Schmid as the OSCE Secretary General, the Organization will have a great duo at its top during the whole next year."



**Edi Rama**  
OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania (OSCE/Ghada Hazim)

punishment was the first OSCE decision on the topic and the most comprehensive text in the human dimension in more than a decade.

Corruption, a phenomenon that creates obstacles to economic growth and fuels inequality, impunity, and instability, was addressed throughout the Albanian Chairmanship. Albania notably promoted the OSCE's action to foster good governance and combat corruption by considering responses made possible by digital public services, as well as the links between corruption and money laundering, terrorism and environmental degradation. The MC decision on preventing and



The gavel used by the Chairperson-in-Office to adopt decisions by the OSCE Ministerial Council, Tirana, 4 December 2020. (Albanian MFA)

combating corruption through digitalization and increased transparency was the first decision elaborating upon and introducing new commitments linking the use of digital tools with the fight against corruption – and the first decision on anti-corruption since the MC meeting held in Basel in 2014.

A balance between economic and environmental activities was ensured, including between economic and environmental sessions in the three Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) meetings. The first-ever blended EEF, Economic and Environmental Committee and Economic and Environmental Implementation Meetings were arranged and successfully organized.

The 2020 Annual Security Review Conference was the first major security conference held in a virtual/hybrid format. With the first-ever OSCE “Cyber/ICT Security Day” in June and the OSCE-wide Cyber/ICT Security Conference in 2020, Albania stepped up its commitment to advance multi-stakeholder approaches to cyber/ICT security. For the first time, the Chair also led discussions on gender mainstreaming in cyber/ICT security efforts.

Albania prioritized initiatives to counter the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW), and increasing the security of stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA) was a priority. The Chairmanship organized initiatives to enhance international efforts to combat trafficking in human beings (CTHB) together with the Office of Special Representative and Co-ordinator for CTHB.

Albania co-organized the first-ever conference on a comprehensive approach to addressing organized crime through strategic partnerships in October 2020, putting the topic of organized crime back on the OSCE agenda. The 2020 “OSCE-Wide Counter Terrorism Conference” in September marked the largest dialogue format of its kind in the OSCE, with the aim of enhancing high-level and grass-roots partnerships, and it gathered more than 500 participants. The MC declaration on strengthening co-operation in countering transnational organized crime was the first ministerial document on the topic since 2006, and the first commitment in the politico-military dimension since 2016.

## BUILDING STABILITY THROUGH DIALOGUE

The OSCE is a unique platform for dialogue. Its success stories are rooted in mutual understanding and consensus built up among participating States over time. Inspired by the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Albanian Chairmanship sought to revitalize dialogue within the Organization.

The Albanian Chairmanship offered all participating States equal status in dialogue and exchange in an effort to rebuild trust between participating States and lay out solutions to shared challenges, culminating with the appointment of a new Secretary General and new heads of institutions, and achieving new standards in both geographical and gender representation.

Given Albania’s reputation for social and religious harmony, the Albanian Chairmanship backed initiatives promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and others that invest in youth and religious dialogue in the OSCE region. As 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the Albanian Chairmanship intensified efforts to promote human dignity and confront hate and hate speech whenever and wherever they occur. At the beginning of the year, the Chairmanship organized the “Tirana Conference on Anti-Semitism” with the participation of high-ranking officials from OSCE participating States, as well as civil society and academia.

Security in the OSCE area is not only determined by our internal relations, but it is also inextricably linked to that of our neighbours. Therefore, the Albanian Chairmanship focused on promoting dialogue with OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. The Chairmanship intensified co-operation with Asian Partners as evidenced by monthly in-depth discussions and the first PC meeting dedicated to reviewing the OSCE’s co-operation with the Asian Partners, held on 3 September. The adoption of the MC declaration on co-operation with the OSCE Asian Partners was important, especially in view of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of this partnership, which Albania will proudly chair in 2021.

Equally, the Albanian Chairmanship, despite the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic, managed to foster exchanges with other international actors, in particular with the European Union (EU) and the UN, and to bolster interparliamentary dialogue and the fundamental contribution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The Albanian Chairmanship undertook action to promote dialogue, trust and partnership between governments and civil society groups and grass-roots organizations, bearing in mind that they play a central role in the monitoring and promotion of rights and fundamental freedoms in our region.

Similarly, Albania drew on the experiences of South-Eastern Europe, one of the youngest regions in the OSCE, to prioritize action in support of youth in peace and security. The engagement of young people remains essential for establishing a culture of peace, dialogue, justice, peaceful coexistence, trust and reconciliation, and their active political participation is a precondition for a sound democratic process. The Albanian Chairmanship upheld its commitment to mainstream youth in all major events with the aim of strengthening the role of the Special Representative on Youth and Security in the OSCE agenda.

## 27TH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL 3–4 DECEMBER 2020, TIRANA

"Our Organization has been struggling lately. And I am mindful that divergences and challenges will continue. But I trust that the Tirana Ministerial Council – where the 57 [participating States] demonstrated they can come together on important decisions, despite differences – is a positive turning point for the OSCE."

**Edi Rama**

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania

The culmination of the Albanian Chairmanship, the Tirana Ministerial Council of 3–4 December, produced deliverables rich in number and substance – 11 in all – which for the first time in a six-year period, span across the three dimensions of security, and include the appointment of the Secretary General and heads of institutions. Being the first-ever OSCE Ministerial Council to be held entirely online, it set a number of new benchmarks, with 1,122 participants from participating States, 53 foreign ministers and 94 press representatives.

The previous, current, incoming and future Chairs adopted statements on the OSCE's efforts towards peace with respect to Ukraine and on implementing our commitments together.

### DECISIONS AND DECLARATIONS ADOPTED AT THE 2020 OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

- Decision on the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General
- Decision on the appointment of the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Decision on the appointment of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Decision on the appointment of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
- Decision on the OSCE Chairmanship in the year 2023
- Decision on preventing and combating corruption through digitalization and increased transparency

- Decision on prevention and eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Declaration on strengthening co-operation in countering transnational organized crime
- Declaration on co-operation with the OSCE Asian Partners
- Decision on the time and place of the next meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
- Ministerial Statement on the negotiations on the Transdniestrian settlement process in the "5+2" format



The 27th meeting of the Ministerial Council was the first-ever to be held remotely, Tirana, 3 December 2020. (Albanian MFA)



Representatives of the OSCE Troika Albania, Sweden and Slovakia listen to the address by Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, Tirana, 3 December 2020. (Albanian MFA)

### 9/VIENNA

Opening address by Edi Rama, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

### 20–21/KYIV

Chairperson-in-Office visits Kyiv and Stanytsia Luhanska

### 29/BRUSSELS

Chairperson-in-Office meets NATO's Secretary General and addresses the North Atlantic Council

### 30/VIENNA

Commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day

### JANUARY

## TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP AMBASSADOR HEIDI GRAU

### Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group

The Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) brings together representatives from the OSCE, Ukraine and Russia as well as, by agreement of its members, participants from certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. It is the only forum where the conflict sides meet regularly to discuss the implementation of the Minsk agreements, as well as practical issues of critical importance for the civilian population. Its agenda covers a wide range of topics in the political, security, socio-economic and humanitarian fields. Effective co-ordination with the SMM is ensured thanks to the fact that the SMM's Chief Monitor is also the Co-ordinator of the TCG Working Group on Security Issues.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the TCG managed to meet throughout the year, according to plan, moving online after mid-March 2020. While the pandemic led to the further disconnection of the non-government-

controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions from the rest of Ukraine, the TCG and its Working Group on Economic Issues devoted constant attention to enabling the supply of and payment transfers for water, electricity, gas and telecommunications across the contact line. The SMM's support made possible needed repairs and the functioning of essential infrastructure in the conflict zone. In April, another exchange of conflict-related detainees took place that had been agreed upon in the TCG. In July, the TCG adopted a landmark ceasefire decision that significantly reduced the level of violence in the conflict area compared with previous years.

Building on previous achievements and upholding the conclusions agreed by the Paris Normandy summit of 9 December 2019, the TCG pursued efforts to implement the political aspects of the Minsk agreements. In addition, it agreed new areas for military disengagement and mine clearance. The opening of two new crossing points in the Luhansk region was in progress at the time of writing. When completed, they will greatly facilitate travel across the contact line, considerably improving life for the local population.



#### 4–5/TIRANA

Conference on combating anti-Semitism in the OSCE region

#### 6/NEW YORK

Chairperson-in-Office addresses UN Security Council and meets UN Secretary-General António Guterres

#### 11–12/VIENNA

High-level conference on foreign terrorist fighters

#### 20/VIENNA

Albanian Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Etjen Xhafaj addresses OSCE PA winter session

#### 26/MOSCOW

Chairperson-in-Office visits Moscow

#### 26/VIENNA

Albanian Deputy Minister of Interior Romina Kuko addresses joint FSC–PC meeting on counter-terrorism.

#### FEBRUARY

#### 2/VIENNA

PC Chair Igli Hasani addresses UNODC Commission on Narcotic Drugs

#### 3/VIENNA

30th Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting

#### 15/VIENNA

First COVID-19 lockdown starts in Austria

#### 19/VIENNA

SMM mandate and budget are adopted

#### MARCH



## AMBASSADOR ANDRZEJ KASPRZYK

**Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference**

**Budget: €1,179,700 (Unified budget)**

**Staff: 17**

[www.osce.org/prcio](http://www.osce.org/prcio)

From January to March 2020, the Personal Representative, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, and his team conducted monitoring exercises and continued to look for opportunities to promote further confidence-building measures with the consent of the sides. Throughout the year, the Office supported the Chairperson-in-Office and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and provided a continuous overview of the situation on the ground.

At the beginning of the year, the Office conducted monitoring exercises six times on the line of contact and three times on the border. In addition, the Office provided support to a humanitarian operation in February on the border, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to locate and return the remains of a missing serviceman. Ambassador Kasprzyk supported the activity of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, including at the meeting of the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Geneva in January. He also participated in consultations with Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister in Moscow in January and Turkey's Foreign Minister in Ankara in March.

The situation following the spread of COVID-19 led to the closure of international borders throughout the region, travel restrictions and restrictions to avoid face-to-face contacts. This forced the suspension of the Office's monitoring activity from April.

During the war from 27 September to 10 November 2020, the Office worked around the clock, and Ambassador Kasprzyk was in constant contact with high-ranking interlocutors from Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as with the Chairmanship and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. In October, Ambassador Kasprzyk travelled to Moscow, Washington, DC, and Geneva to assist in meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, together

with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. He also participated in consultations with senior officials at the ministries of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation and the United States of America as well as with the incoming Chairperson-in-Office and Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde in Stockholm. In Geneva, together with the Co-Chairs, he briefed and exchanged views with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the President of the ICRC. Staff from the Office were deployed in support of a humanitarian operation in October, in which the Azerbaijani side handed over a number of bodies to the Armenian side with the support of the ICRC.

Since the 9 November 2020 statement that brought the fighting to an end and the deployment of Russian peacekeepers to the region, Ambassador Kasprzyk has been working with the OSCE Chairmanship, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the sides to define how best to fulfil the mandate of the Office going forward.

## THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP

**Lieutenant Colonel Sulo Mustafaraj**



Established in 1994, the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG) makes recommendations to the Chairperson-in-Office on developing a plan for the establishment of a multinational peacekeeping force for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference. Many of the activities in the 2020 Annual Work Plan were severely curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To mitigate this situation, the HLPG adjusted its posture to execute its tasks using a blended format, focusing primarily on online work.

The nature of peacekeeping continues to evolve. An iterative analysis of emerging trends and practices enabled the HLPG to develop and maintain the necessary levels of competency to address the challenges related to the planning for the possible deployment of a peacekeeping mission. To this end, the HLPG members participated in a wide range of conferences, courses and seminars. Additionally, close liaison was maintained with relevant organizations and institutions. Among other things, the HLPG completed the 2019 integration of Environmental Protection into the planning process.

## SOUTH CAUCASUS



**AMBASSADOR  
RUDOLF MICHALKA**  
Special Representative  
of the OSCE  
Chairperson-in-Office  
for the South Caucasus

The overall situation related to the aftermath of the August 2008 war in Georgia remained free of military hostilities, and against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic the Albanian Chairmanship focused its efforts on the situation of conflict-affected populations. The OSCE Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Rudolf Michalka, worked hard to promote co-operation and pragmatism on public health issues, which the OSCE nurtured through its good offices. The OSCE was able to increase its regular contact with all stakeholders and, jointly with the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, to convene two meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Ergneti, an important platform for de-escalating tension and addressing concrete issues on the ground. Many of the dialogue efforts of the Geneva International Discussions had to be postponed, although Ambassador Michalka and his fellow Co-Chairs from the European Union and the United Nations ultimately facilitated one in-person round of talks in Geneva, on 10–11 December 2020, with relevant pandemic mitigation measures in place. The Chairmanship also supported further confidence-building measures related to youth, and paid particular attention to the issue of missing persons. Two topics of special focus were women, peace and security and efforts to make the OSCE's approach more inclusive.

## TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT



**AMBASSADOR  
THOMAS MAYR-  
HARTING**  
Special Representative  
of the OSCE  
Chairperson-in-Office  
for the Transnistrian  
Settlement Process

In 2020, the Albanian Chairmanship worked in close co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Moldova to promote full implementation of the Berlin Plus “package of eight” and to facilitate discussions on further confidence-building measures. Special Representative Thomas Mayr-Harting made three visits for meetings with the Sides, including an informal brainstorming session with both political representatives in Bulboaca/Bender on 3–4 March 2020. While these contacts helped identify potential next steps – the frequency of meetings between the Sides was similar to that of 2019 – the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures had a growing impact, in particular regarding interconnectivity between both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River. In co-ordination with the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the Special Representative was in regular informal contact with the Sides, mediators and observers to help overcome these problems. Despite intense efforts, it proved impossible to organize a conference in the 5+2 format, especially due to pandemic-related travel constraints. At the virtual 27th OSCE Ministerial Council in Tirana on 4 December 2020, the 57 participating States adopted a ministerial statement on the negotiations on the Transnistrian Settlement process in the 5+2 format, which also presents priorities for forthcoming work.

### 16/TIRANA/VIENNA

Mutual release and exchange of detainees in eastern Ukraine

### 23/VIENNA

The first-ever fully online PC meeting is held

### 24/TIRANA/COPENHAGEN/VIENNA/WARSAW/THE HAGUE

International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

### APRIL

### 5/VIENNA

Commemoration of the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp

### 7/VIENNA

PC commemorates the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II

### 13/VIENNA

Albanian Deputy Minister of Interior Rovena Voda addresses FSC on SALW and SCA / mine action

### 20/VIENNA

Albanian Minister of Defence Olta Xhaçka addresses joint FSC–PC meeting dedicated to UNSCR 1325

### 22/VIENNA

Chairmanship activity dedicated to youth, peace and security

### 25–26/VIENNA

First Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on addressing all forms of intolerance and discrimination

### MAY

## COMBATING CORRUPTION



**PROFESSOR PAOLA SEVERINO**  
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption

Having been entrusted, for the third consecutive year, with the mandate of Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption, Professor Severino supported the Albanian Chairmanship in setting the fight against corruption as one of the Chairmanship's key priorities. Within her mandate, Professor Severino actively promoted OSCE principles and commitments by calling on and encouraging governments and international organizations to intensify their anti-corruption efforts, and also by strengthening the OSCE "acquis" in this domain and providing adequate funding to relevant extrabudgetary projects.

On the occasion of her participation in high-level OSCE events and field visits – among them a regional seminar in North Macedonia in February 2020, the OSCE high-level conference against corruption in July 2020, the Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague in September 2020 and a round-table discussion in Tirana in November 2020 with the participation of Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Luigi Di Maio and Albanian Minister of Justice Etilda Gjonaj – Professor Severino reaffirmed the need to support innovation, increased transparency and digitalization in the OSCE region as the most effective measures to enhance the resilience of public governance in the OSCE participating States.

With the region facing the COVID-19 crisis, Professor Severino urged the OSCE participating States to promote a participatory approach among parliament, government, civil society, youth, the business community and media to foster citizens' trust and social consensus on rejecting corruption and establishing a new social compact based on a culture of integrity and collective responsibility.

### 4/VIENNA

First virtual meeting of capitals in the Structured Dialogue

### 15/VIENNA

First OSCE Chairmanship "Cyber/ICT Security Day"

### 17/VIENNA

Chairmanship event on good practice and effective measures to combat gender-based violence

### 22–23/VIENNA

Second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on freedom of expression, media and information

### 23–25/VIENNA

Annual Security Review Conference

## JUNE

## PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY



**AMBASSADOR MELANNE VERVEER**  
Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender

The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender, Ambassador Melanne Verveer addressed a joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the Permanent Council where she urged the Organization to adopt more inclusive approaches to move the prospects for peace forward in protracted conflicts by involving civil society and community peacebuilders. She spoke at a special session of the Permanent Council on the elimination of sexual violence in conflict and joined Amb. Hasani to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, recognizing that violence has increased at alarming rates due to COVID-19. She spoke at the Permanent Council session to mark the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and addressed the Gender Equality Review Conference, underscoring the need to accelerate progress on commitments undertaken in previous Ministerial Council decisions. She also joined ODIHR as the keynote speaker for its round table on promoting women's participation and leadership in political parties.

Ambassador Verveer met with the Women's Platform – regional peacebuilders – in May to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on conflict resolution efforts. She also took part in an OSCE-sponsored meeting with peacebuilders in Ukraine one year after her official country visit to the country. In November 2020, Ambassador Verveer joined the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina for its conference on the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, where she offered reflections on her previous country visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### 6–7/VIENNA

High-level conference on good governance and the fight against corruption in the digital era

### 10–11/VIENNA

Commemorating 25 years of the Srebrenica genocide

### 20–22/VIENNA

Albanian Minister of Interior Sander Lleshaj and PC Chair Igli Hasani address Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference

### 23/VIENNA

Chairperson-in-Office welcomes agreement on additional measures to strengthen ceasefire in eastern Ukraine

### 30/VIENNA

PC commemorates 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

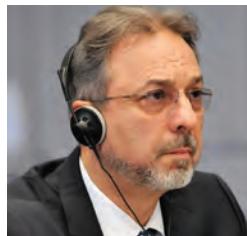
## JULY

## THREE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION



### RABBI ANDREW BAKER

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism



### AMBASSADOR MEHMET PAÇACI

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims



### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR REGINA POLAK

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions

The promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination was a priority of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship. On 3–4 February 2020, the Chairmanship hosted the “Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region” in Tirana, which was attended by the three Personal Representatives. The event brought together civil society leaders and experts, representatives of participating States, ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Union and the United Nations. It enumerated the considerable challenges of providing for Jewish community security, addressing the proliferation of anti-Semitism in cyberspace, advancing the use and adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s Working Definition of Antisemitism, and protecting the right of religious practices, such as male circumcision, that are important to both Jews and Muslims.

As most of the Personal Representatives’ plans for country and other visits in 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their work moved online as of spring 2020. Ambassador Mehmet Paçacı’s planned visit to Norway was replaced by a series of online consultations with Norwegian officials.

The three Personal Representatives spoke at a number of online conferences, including the “Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Addressing All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination”, held on 25–26 May 2020, and a webinar called “Addressing Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance and Discrimination in the OSCE Area, with a Focus on Youth”, held on 30 September 2020. In his interventions, Ambassador Paçacı drew attention to rising anti-Muslim incidents, intolerance and discrimination, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The undeniable increase in cases of anti-Muslim intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE region was a common concern voiced by many NGO representatives, reports by international organizations and ODIHR, as well as in international print outlets and on social media. The speakers also shared good practices: for instance, a court that ended an initiative banning Muslim students’ wearing of the hijab and thus denying their freedom of religion or belief, and a project that highlighted the contributions of

Muslims to society to challenge the stereotypes people might have about Muslims.

Against the background of the coronavirus pandemic, Associate Professor Regina Polak, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions, drew attention to an increase in intolerance against and discrimination of persons, groups and minorities – be it on the grounds of gender, ethnic, cultural or religious background; or any other status – and the dangers of scapegoating. She called for state-provided visions and narratives of inclusion, and enhanced co-operation with civil society to highlight and strengthen positive models of dialogue, encounters and cultures of conviviality that already exist in the OSCE area. These models, she stressed, must be accompanied by education and should be based on more empirical research.

“As our method of working shifted to the virtual world, the purveyors of anti-Semitism and other forms of hate moved there as well. Looking to 2021 and an eventual return to some normalcy, we will again confront all the challenges presented at the ‘Tirana Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region’.”

**Rabbi Andrew Baker**

“Under the extraordinary conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, incidents of anti-Muslim hatred, discrimination and intolerance, which had also been on the rise in previous years, appear to have increased further.”

**Ambassador Mehmet Paçacı**

“Especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, which fuelled the proliferation of intolerance and discrimination of persons, groups and minorities throughout the whole OSCE region, people need orientation and future prospects. We need to create strong visions of community and positive narratives on what inclusive societies can look like.”

**Associate Professor Regina Polak**

## ASSISTANCE WITH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS



**DR. VOLKER FROBARTH**

OSCE Representative to the Russian-Latvian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners

The Representative continued to assist with the implementation of the 1994 bilateral agreement between the governments of Latvia and the Russian Federation on social guarantees for military pensioners from the Russian Federation and their families residing in Latvia. Some 5,994 people currently fall under the special provisions of the agreement.

The average age of the military pensioners has reached 80, thus making the subjects of the bilateral agreement especially vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, no COVID-19 cases among the military pensioners were reported.

No individual complaints by military pensioners were submitted in 2020, continuing the trend of previous years. The nature of issues considered by the Commission has shifted from individual cases to matters concerning the framework for providing services according to the specifications of the bilateral agreement. The 2020 report to the Permanent Council concluded that the function of the Representative should continue as a standby arrangement.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK



**AMBASSADOR HELMUT TICHY**

Chairperson of the Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE

The Chairmanship appointed Ambassador Helmut Tichy as Chairperson of the open-ended Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting of the Informal Working Group scheduled for May was cancelled. The meeting in October was held in a blended format and featured a presentation by the editors of the book *The Legal Framework of the OSCE*, published by Cambridge University Press. The presentation provided input on the legal issues at hand from an academic point of view and allowed for a lively exchange between delegations, the Secretariat and academic experts. Furthermore, the meeting again focused on finding a solution that would grant international legal personality to the OSCE, in accordance with one of four options that had emerged during the discussions in previous years. The Secretariat also provided delegations with valuable updates on the operational consequences of the lack of a clear legal status for the OSCE.

### 28/VIENNA

Chairperson-in-Office addresses special PC meeting on the situation in Belarus

### AUGUST

#### 7-8/VIENNA

Chairmanship “OSCE-wide Cyber/ICT Security Conference”

#### 10-11/PRAGUE

Acting Albanian Foreign Minister Gent Cakaj and PC Chair Igli Hasani address 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

#### 11/VIENNA

Due to COVID-19, OSCE participating States decide HDIM will not take place in 2020

#### 14-15/VIENNA

OSCE-wide Counter-terrorism Conference 2020

### SEPTEMBER

#### 17/TIRANA/WASHINGTON

Chairperson-in-Office addresses Helsinki Committee

#### 27/VIENNA

Chairperson-in-Office calls for return to ceasefire around Nagorno-Karabakh

#### 28/VIENNA

Webinar series on human rights, democracy and the rule of law

#### 29/VIENNA

Special PC meeting on situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict context

## YOUTH AND SECURITY



**MS. KEISI SEFERI**  
**Special Representative  
of the Chairperson-in-  
Office on Youth and  
Security**

The Special Representative on Youth and Security devoted her work to keeping youth high on the OSCE agenda, and advocated for the meaningful and active participation of young people in the work of the Organization and across the three dimensions of comprehensive security. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Special Representative's advocacy for the right of young women and men to be included in all aspects of political, social and economic processes resulted in the promotion of several online events showcasing the role of young people in peace and security, such as a series of webinars organized with the Office of the Secretary General and the conference "Advancing Political Participation of Young People across the OSCE Region", organized in co-operation with ODIHR on 16 December.

Further, the Special Representative prioritized the promotion of platforms for intergenerational dialogue within

the OSCE to raise awareness about the role of young people in responding to unprecedented challenges in an innovative manner by using technologies and eliminating barriers to connecting with one another. In particular, she promoted a narrative on the transformative potential of the agendas on youth, peace and security and on women, peace and security.

On the margins of the 27th OSCE Ministerial Council in Tirana, the Special Representative engaged in high-level discussions on the historical role young people have played in the transition to democracy in the OSCE region, and highlighted their contribution to building more inclusive societies and fostering social cohesion.

Throughout the year, the Special Representative on Youth and Security took part in over 20 OSCE and external initiatives, including consultation meetings across the OSCE area, and engaged with participating States and OSCE executive structures, international organizations, academia and civil society practitioners. She supported the OSCE Secretariat Perspectives 2030 Initiative, which provides a platform for young women and men to discuss with decision-makers their vision of a safer future for the OSCE area in 2030 and beyond. In this spirit, she fully supported the Chairmanship's activities, initiatives and objectives on youth and security.

### 5/VIENNA

Conference on addressing organized crime through strategic partnerships

### 6/VIENNA

Conference on combating the threat of illicit drugs and diversion of chemical precursors

### 12/TIRANA

Albanian Deputy Foreign Minister Agron Tare addresses OSCE Asian Conference

## OCTOBER

### 3/TIRANA

Albanian Deputy Foreign Minister Agron Tare addresses OSCE Mediterranean Conference

### 5/VIENNA

PC condemns terrorist attacks in Vienna

### 9–10/VIENNA

Third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on freedom of religion or belief in the digital age

### 10/VIENNA

Chairmanship welcomes cessation of fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict context.

## NOVEMBER

### 16/VIENNA

Security Days event dedicated to the Charter of Paris

### 19–20/VIENNA

Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting

### 22/VIENNA

PC commemorates 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325

### 27–28/VIENNA

Third Gender Equality Review Conference

### 3–4/TIRANA

27th OSCE Ministerial Council

### 10/DECEMBER

PC welcomes Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić

### 12/DECEMBER

Chairmanship commemorates 25th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement

## DECEMBER

## PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION

The OSCE maintains special relations with five Asian and six Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to address shared security challenges. The Albanian OSCE Chairmanship continued to promote ongoing dialogue and joint activities with the Partners for Co-operation with support from the outgoing Slovak and incoming Swedish OSCE Chairmanships.

## ASIAN PARTNERSHIP FOR CO-OPERATION GROUP

Asian Partners for Co-operation: Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand  
Chairmanship: Slovakia



Ambassador Lee Taeho, Vice Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, at the 2020 OSCE Asian Conference, 12 October 2020. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea)

During its Chairmanship of the Asian Partnership for Co-operation Group in 2020, Slovakia focused on promoting and strengthening an open and interactive dialogue. In elaborating the agenda of the Asian Partnership for Co-operation Group, Slovakia worked with the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship and, in particular, the Asian Partners to ensure that the agenda also reflected their priorities and followed a demand-driven approach. The collaboration not only ensured that the agenda corresponded to the interests and concerns of the Asian Partner countries but also supported the priorities of the OSCE Chairmanship and built on the Ministerial Council decision adopted in Bratislava in 2019 that renamed the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group.

In 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, all five meetings of the Asian Partnership for Co-operation Group were held virtually; nonetheless, the OSCE participating States and Asian Partners were able to engage in timely discussions of key security issues of interest to all sides and to share best practices and experiences with one another. Each meeting featured speakers from one of the Asian Partner countries, as well as presentations on the chosen topics by experts from international organizations, diplomats, academia and civil society. They included discussions on the OSCE's commitment to the conflict cycle; good governance and the fight against corruption; connectivity and trade facilitation; women, peace and security; and challenges of emerging technologies and cybersecurity.

## 2020 OSCE ASIAN CONFERENCE

The 2020 OSCE Asian Conference, focusing on multilateral responses to global security challenges, took place on 12–13 October via Zoom. The Conference was organized in partnership with the Republic of Korea and was originally scheduled to take place in Seoul. All five Asian Partners for Co-operation and 30 OSCE participating States attended. More than 150 political representatives and policy experts, as well as practitioners from international, regional and subregional organizations, academia, business and civil society from across the OSCE's participating States and Asian Partners for Co-operation, gathered to explore ways of tackling global security challenges in the three dimensions of security. During the high-level opening session, speakers reconfirmed that security in the OSCE area was inextricably linked to that of other regions, that it could be strengthened by better mutual understanding and that the international community had to work together on a global scale. The opening was followed by three thematic sessions dedicated to the OSCE's three dimensions with a focus on regional confidence- and security-building measures and exchanges of best practices between Europe and Asia, the mitigation of transborder environmental risks and challenges and the nexus between security and access to information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION GROUP

Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia  
Chairmanship: Sweden



Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ann Linde (c), at the high-level segment of the 2020 Mediterranean Conference, Stockholm/Vienna, 3 November 2020. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden)

In the spirit of growing co-operation and genuine partnership, the 2019 OSCE Ministerial Council in Bratislava renamed the Mediterranean Contact Group the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group. Following up on one of the proposals advanced on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Mediterranean Partnership in 2019, the 2020 Albanian Chairmanship dedicated a Permanent Council meeting on 12 November 2020 to a review of co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners.

Sweden, as the Chair of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group, promoted a dynamic, interactive and operational OSCE Mediterranean Partnership during 2020. The focus was placed on increasing security in the OSCE region, including by leveraging the full potential of closer dialogue and co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweden managed to organize three meetings of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group during the year. The meetings promoted dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation on a range of crucial topics with a view to intensifying the exchange of best practices and identifying areas for long-term co-operation. Topics included information technology and the fight against human trafficking; women, peace, and security; and youth engagement and participation to counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

In addition, representatives of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation were involved in a range of additional OSCE conferences and events. On 17 February 2020, an Arabic version of the OSCE handbook *Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism: Good Practices for Law Enforcement* was launched in Cairo thanks to co-operation between the OSCE Transnational Threats Department

and the League of Arab States. On 5 October 2020, the OSCE Chairmanship organized an OSCE-wide conference called "Addressing Organized Crime through Strategic Partnerships", which was designed by the Strategic Police Matters Unit. A plurality of participating States and partner countries offered an overview of their respective challenges and recognized the need for an inclusive regional approach in addressing them.

The Partnership Fund supported a number of activities in 2020, including projects addressing human trafficking in the context of Mediterranean migration movements and tackling the challenge posed by trafficking in cultural property. The Partnership Fund continued to support activities in the field of youth engagement and women's empowerment.

### 2020 OSCE MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE

The Mediterranean Conference, held on 3 November 2020, provided a high-level political platform for advancing the Mediterranean Partnership and for discussing security developments in the OSCE and Mediterranean regions, also in light of the security implications of the pandemic. Titled "Promoting Security in the OSCE Mediterranean Region through Sustainable Development and Economic Growth", the conference was a full-day event with more than 250 participants from over 60 countries. The high-level political session was attended by a total of 16 ministers and deputy ministers from Partners for Co-operation and participating States, confirming the Mediterranean Conference as a ministerial-level forum for regional dialogue. Two afternoon thematic sessions were held, focusing on women's economic participation and on co-operation in environmental issues. Several delegations put forward specific proposals for the future of the Partnership and a move towards a more secure, peaceful and prosperous future – for the benefit of all.



## PERMANENT COUNCIL

The Permanent Council is the OSCE's principal body for regular political dialogue and decision-making among representatives of the OSCE participating States. It meets weekly in Vienna.

The weekly meetings of the Permanent Council throughout the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship were chaired by Albania's Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna, Ambassador Igli Hasani. Despite the unprecedented situation created by the pandemic and two lockdowns that caused serious obstacles for the normal continuity of the Organization's work, the Albanian Chairmanship managed to hold 44 sessions of the Permanent Council, including nine special sessions.

The weekly meetings of the Permanent Council serve as the main platform for dialogue, debates, consultations, the exchange of ideas and decision-making not only on recurring issues on the OSCE agenda but also in matters related to Chairmanship priorities and to unpredicted developments in the OSCE area. Throughout the year, Ambassador Hasani welcomed distinguished guest speakers to the Permanent Council, including foreign ministers and deputy ministers from the participating States and high-level representatives from international organizations.

Whether in the traditional format at the Hofburg, a blended format or entirely online, the guest speakers in the Permanent Council highlighted issues of special relevance to the Chairmanship, such as monitoring the situation in and around Ukraine; reinforcing the OSCE's engagement in conflict resolution, including strengthening the role and efforts of all OSCE field operations; promoting gender equality and the role of youth in peace and security; establishing better co-operation and partnerships in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism; promoting good governance and combating corruption; combating human trafficking; and strengthening joint engagements for the full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms including by promoting freedom of expression, tolerance and non-discrimination.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Ambassador Heidi Grau, and the Chief Monitor of the SMM, Ambassador Halit Çevik, addressed the Permanent Council six times regarding the crisis in and around Ukraine alone. The Chairperson also called special meetings in response to the developments and unrest following the presidential election in Belarus or to hear the Personal Representative of the OSCE

Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference on the developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict context. The meetings of the Permanent Council provided an opportunity to foster close, mutually beneficial co-operation with other international organizations active in the OSCE area through the participation of high-level representatives such as the Secretary General of the CoE, an Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, European Union representatives, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the President of the ICRC.



"Being small isn't necessarily a disadvantage. If one works hard enough and plays to one's strengths, anything is possible. The Tirana Ministerial went above and beyond expectations, even for me and Chairperson Rama. If there is one lesson learned, it is that achievements became possible for no other reason than sheer hard work, grit and determination. Albania didn't have the diplomatic firepower or experience of others before us. But we made up for that with our work ethic and team spirit, and kept going despite everything 2020 threw at us, all of us. Consensus is never taken for granted, until the very end. So we thank the participating States for working with us for consensus and for lending their support."

**Ambassador Igli Hasani**  
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna

## **CHAIRPERSONS OF THE THREE COMMITTEES APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

- **Chairperson of the Security Committee:** Ambassador Neil Bush, United Kingdom
- **Chairpersons of the Economic and Environmental Committee:** Ambassador Sherzod Asadov, Uzbekistan; Ambassador Florian Raunig, Austria
- **Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee:** Ambassador Ivo Šrámek, Czech Republic

## **CHAIRPERSONS OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

- Chairperson of the Informal Working Group established by PC Decision No. 1039 on Development of Confidence-Building Measures to Reduce the Risks of Conflict Stemming from the Use of Information and Communication Technologies: Ambassador Károly Dán, Hungary
- Chairperson of the Informal Working Group on the Structured Dialogue on the Current and Future Challenges and Risks to Security In the OSCE Area pursuant to Ministerial Council Declaration No. 4 of 2016: Ambassador Luis Cuesta Civis, Spain
- Special Adviser to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE and Chairperson of the Open-Ended Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE: Ambassador Helmut Tichy, Austria
- Chairperson of the Informal Working Group on Civil Society Participation at OSCE meetings: Ambassador Wolfgang Amadeus Brühlhart, Switzerland

## **HIGH-LEVEL SPEAKERS AT THE PERMANENT COUNCIL IN 2020**



**9 January, 28 August**

### **EDI RAMA**

*2020 OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania*



**16 January, 26 November**

### **GEORGE TSERETELI**

*President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly*



**30 January**

### **DAVID ZALKALIANI**

*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia and President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*



**30 January**

### **GEORGES SANTNER**

*Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*

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**16 July**

**ROBERT RYDBERG**

*Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden*



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**23 July**

**MILTIADIS VARVITSIOTIS**

*Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece and President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*



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**26 November**

**MIROSLAV LAJČÁK**

*EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues*



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**10 December**

**MARIJA PEJČINOVIC BURIĆ**

*Secretary General of the Council of Europe*



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**10 December**

**PETER MAURER**

*President of the International Committee of the Red Cross*





## FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) is the OSCE's key decision-making body on politico-military aspects of security. Its participants meet weekly in Vienna to discuss issues such as arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. The Forum Chairmanship rotates among the OSCE participating States, with each state chairing the FSC for four months. In 2020, the FSC was chaired by Turkey, Ukraine and Germany.

# Forum for Security Co-operation

[www.osce.org/forum-for-security-cooperation](http://www.osce.org/forum-for-security-cooperation)

The year 2020 was an extraordinary one on account of COVID-19, and it tested the FSC's ability to conduct its work. In their immediate responses to the crisis, the FSC Chairmanships, in close co-ordination with the Chairmanship of the Permanent Council and the OSCE Secretariat, maintained continuity in the FSC's work while following the host country's preventive measures and prioritizing duty of care for personnel.

In the course of the last year, the strategic discussions during the Security Dialogues indicated the FSC's importance as a platform for dialogue, addressing security issues of common interest and concern. Although the topic regularly raised by Ukraine, involving active participation on the part of interested delegations, continued to dominate the Forum's discussions, there were a variety of other active discussions on the following themes: normative and project-related aspects in the field of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition (SCA), including the topic of mine action; regional and subregional military and defence co-operation; the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda; the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, including private military and security companies; implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004); the Vienna Document 2011 and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs); matters related to terrorism; new technologies; and COVID-19 and its impact on politico-military aspects of security in the OSCE area, including the implementation of CSBMs. The three 2020 FSC Chairmanships organized a total of 21 Security Dialogues. Several initiatives undertaken by participating States led to the adoption of eight decisions, all designed to support the implementation of existing commitments.

By closely following the prevailing developments of the COVID-19 situation, the FSC Chairmanships provided guidance on modalities of the FSC's work. With the support of the OSCE Secretariat, the FSC meetings, those of the Working Groups and informal meetings were conducted either in a blended format or remotely via teleconference, starting with the Ukrainian FSC Chairmanship. The Turkish FSC Chairmanship issued a letter appealing to all participating States, within their sovereign rights, to refrain from or postpone verification activities under the auspices of the Vienna Document 2011 whenever possible, until it was determined that the prevailing conditions allowed such activities to take place safely again. In addition, the FSC Chairmanship invited the participating States to conduct the annual Global Exchange of Military Information electronically. Furthermore, the German FSC Chairmanship issued a letter inviting the participating States to carry out the 2020 annual exchange of military information electronically via the OSCE Communications Network.

Three of the Security Dialogues and many informal meetings were devoted to SALW/SCA, as tasked by the relevant OSCE documents and various relevant FSC and Ministerial Council decisions. Two of the Security Dialogues featured discussions on OSCE work in mine action. Moreover, the dedicated work on updating the

best practice guides on SALW and conventional arms continued throughout the year, and the second "OSCE Biennial Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the OSCE Documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition" – as decided at the 2017 Ministerial Council – was held under the German FSC Chairmanship in October 2020.



Iryna Goriushko from the Halo Trust demining team explains the specifics of clearing lands from explosive items in the context of a mine awareness-raising campaign organized by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine, 19 August 2021. (OSCE/Andrii Dziubenko)

Two Security Dialogues were held with a view to promoting regional stability and adhering to the principles and norms of the OSCE and international law. The one held under Ukraine's FSC Chairmanship concerned the security situation in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov region; the other one, held under the Chairmanship of Turkey, focused on regional security co-operation in countering irregular migration.

Another topic highlighted during the year was the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, to which one Security Dialogue was devoted under Turkey's FSC Chairmanship and another under the Chairmanship of Ukraine.

During Turkey's FSC Chairmanship, instead of sending – as would normally be the case under the FSC's Announcing and Reminding Mechanism – a reminder letter to the participating States that had not provided information pursuant to the Vienna Document, the Chairperson individually approached officials from these states in order to expedite the process.

The 30th Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) took place in March 2020 during Turkey's FSC Chairmanship. Led by Malta and Moldova, the meeting provided an opportunity to raise and discuss various issues related to the present and future implementation of agreed CSBMs.

The ninth Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security was held online in June 2020 under the Ukrainian FSC Chairmanship. The meeting provided a

valuable opportunity for participating States to review the enforcement of the Code and to exchange views on ways to improve its implementation.

The FSC also contributed to the 2020 Annual Security Review Conference within its mandate, providing input to relevant sessions focusing on politico-military elements of security.

The year 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the landmark UNSCR 1325. The FSC Chairmanships devoted a total of three Security Dialogues to gender equality.

With 2020 being a year of commemoration, Turkey dedicated one Security Dialogue to the 20th anniversary of the OSCE Istanbul Summit, using it to look at the lessons of the Summit, described as a "bridge-builder to the 21st century", and to discuss contributions to the FSC's agenda.

All three FSC Chairmanships co-operated closely with the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office and the OSCE Permanent Council on cross-dimensional issues of relevance to both bodies. To this end, four joint meetings of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Council were held, on the Structured Dialogue, on countering terrorism, on UNSCR 1325, and on hybrid threats and modern warfare.

The FSC continued in 2020 to serve as an important platform for dialogue and decisions, while at the same time providing participating States with a forum to discuss matters related to politico-military issues. Despite COVID-19, the FSC proved successful in taking measures to adapt to the current situation and in keeping up with its regular work under the challenging circumstances.



Ambassador Rauf Engin Soysal of Turkey chairs an FSC meeting dedicated to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, Vienna, 11 March 2020.  
(OSCE/Micky Kröll)



## OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 323 parliamentarians from across the OSCE region. It provides a platform for OSCE parliamentarians to engage in dialogue, conduct diplomacy, observe elections and promote governments' compliance with OSCE commitments.

# OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Secretary General: Roberto Montella  
Budget: €3,643,000  
Staff: 32 (including 8 research assistants)  
[www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org)

With members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism visiting Norway in January, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) started 2020 with an ambitious agenda of activities that soon had to adapt to the realities of life under the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the lockdown in the spring, PA members observed parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, conducted diplomatic visits to the United States and Greece, and participated in the PA's annual Winter Meeting in Vienna.

In mid-March, the OSCE PA International Secretariat began working remotely and soon started making announcements of cancelled meetings and the suspension of activities such as election observation. The leadership met virtually to consider options, decided unanimously to freeze the budget and reduce national contributions for the current year, and the PA launched a series of thematic Parliamentary Web Dialogues dealing with various aspects of the pandemic. Assembly leaders also authored several op-eds on COVID-related themes, such as the role of multilateralism and parliaments, the economic impact of the pandemic and the importance of upholding human rights under lockdowns.

## COVID-19 PARLIAMENTARY WEB DIALOGUES

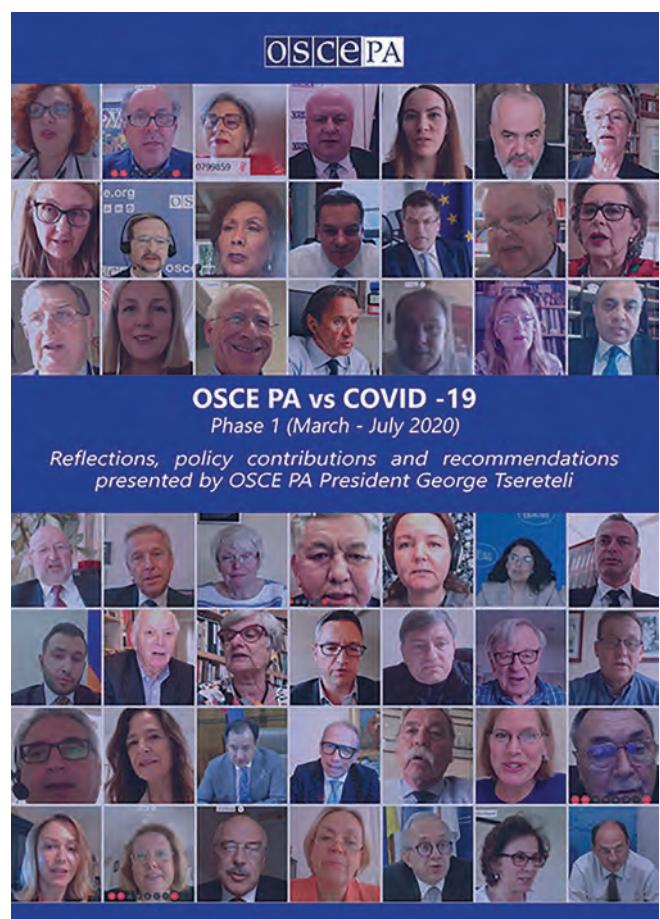
The first of the Parliamentary Web Dialogues was held on 22 April 2020 on the economic security fallout of the pandemic. Featuring speakers from academia, government, the financial sector and the international community, the webinar focused on promoting ambitious government programmes to stimulate the economy. Subsequent webinars were held on the pandemic's effects on conflicts in the OSCE area, human rights and democratic governance, counter-terrorism, gender issues, environmental aspects of the pandemic, the protection of refugees and migrants under lockdowns and the COVID-19 response in diverse societies.

An overriding theme of the Parliamentary Web Dialogues was that parliamentarians play an essential role in promoting good governance and enhancing dialogue on the international level. Participants also stressed that the pandemic has underlined the urgency of addressing long-standing challenges facing the OSCE area, including resolving conflicts, promoting environmental sustainability, managing migration, and ensuring democratic resiliency and social cohesion.

The highlights of the Parliamentary Web Dialogues were included in a report published in mid-July entitled "OSCE PA vs COVID-19: Reflections, policy contributions and recommendations presented by OSCE PA President George Tsereteli."

## PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

Before the coronavirus outbreak, President George Tsereteli visited Baku for meetings with high-level officials, including President Ilham Aliyev, and Secretary General Montella visited New York to sign a memorandum



Cover page of the "OSCE PA vs COVID-19" report



Members of the OSCE PA pay tribute to the 77 victims of the 22 July 2011 terror attacks in Norway, 14 January 2020. (OSCE PA/Marco Bonabello)



The OSCE Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE election mission, Elona Gjebrea Hoxha, and the Head of the OSCE PA Delegation, Pia Kauma, at a polling station in Tbilisi, 31 October 2020. (OSCE PA/Anna Di Domenico)

of understanding with UN Under Secretary General for Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov and foster parliamentary engagement in the implementation of the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Tsereteli and Montella also visited Washington, DC, in early February, meeting with members of Congress, officials from the State Department and staff from the US Helsinki Commission.

During the pandemic, the PA turned to digital diplomacy. The PA Bureau held an online discussion with Belarusian Head of Delegation Andrei Savinykh and exiled Belarusian opposition presidential candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya that focused on the importance of building dialogue in the wake of the disputed presidential election of 9 August 2020. Members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration also met online with European Commission representatives and Greek Migration and Asylum Minister Notis Mitarachi to discuss the upcoming EU Migration and Asylum Pact and the situation on Lesbos following the fires that destroyed the Moria camp in early September.

When fighting broke out in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, President Tsereteli was in regular contact with parliamentarians from Armenia and Azerbaijan, including both countries' speakers of parliament. In these discussions, Tsereteli urged a ceasefire and return to negotiations based on international law and principles of the OSCE Helsinki Final Act.

## ASSEMBLY ENGAGEMENT ON STRENGTHENING THE OSCE

The PA responded to the leadership vacuum created by the lack of consensus on the reappointment of the OSCE Secretary General and the other OSCE heads of institutions in July with a number of initiatives, including a call for action signed by some 50 current and former leaders of the OSCE, an open letter to OSCE foreign ministers and a brainstorming discussion held on 7–8 September in Helsingør, Denmark. Several OSCE experts participated in the Helsingør retreat, which served as an opportunity to explore ways in which the Parliamentary Assembly could better support the Organization and thereby also help overcome some institutional stalemates.

Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, who has served as OSCE Secretary General and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, joined the PA as a High-Level Expert,



The OSCE Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE election mission, Michael Georg Link, and OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Andreas Nothelle at the Convention Center in Philadelphia, where vote counting was taking place, 5 November 2020. (OSCE PA/Nat Parry)

a consultancy position aimed at co-ordinating these efforts in close consultation with the Assembly leadership. The PA's initiative is focused on increasing governments' political interest in the OSCE and strengthening the role of the Organization in addressing contemporary challenges.

## WINTER MEETING: Vienna, 20–21 February

## ANNUAL SESSION: Vancouver, cancelled

## AUTUMN MEETING: San Marino, cancelled

“While an increasing number of transnational and global threats are confronting the OSCE community and threatening our common security, we must empower the Organization with the resources and political support it urgently needs to address old and new challenges.”

**George Tsereteli**  
President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

## CONTRIBUTING POLITICAL EXPERIENCE TO OSCE ELECTION OBSERVATION

OSCE PA election observers contributed their political experience, judgement and visibility to this essential OSCE endeavour, working closely with ODIHR and other international partners. The OSCE PA deployed 141 observers to four countries in 2020: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Montenegro and the United States of America.





## SECRETARIAT

The Vienna-based OSCE Secretariat assists the OSCE Chairmanship, carries out programmatic work in support of OSCE commitments, supports OSCE field activities, maintains relations with international and non-governmental organizations and provides conference, language, administrative, financial, personnel and information technology services.

# Secretariat

Secretary General: **Thomas Greminger** (until July 2020),  
**Helga Maria Schmid** (appointed in December 2020)  
**Budget:** €40,873,800 (Unified budget), €6,099,847<sup>1</sup>  
(Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)<sup>2</sup>  
**Staff:** 416  
[www.osce.org/secretariat](http://www.osce.org/secretariat)

The Secretariat consists of both programmatic and administrative departments. Its thematic work includes conflict prevention, economic and environmental activities, promoting gender equality, youth and security, combating trafficking in human beings and countering transnational threats, including through anti-terrorism, border management and police reform, while also co-operating with partner countries and organizations. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many activities shifted to a virtual environment in 2020, and staff worked and collaborated remotely to adapt their projects to the new needs imposed by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that we need to expect the unexpected, and that it is more important than ever to co-operate in finding solutions. In this exceptional year, the OSCE demonstrated that it is flexible and resilient and that its participating States can count on the Organization to fulfil its mandate of promoting peace and security for the benefit of people throughout the OSCE region.”

**Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä**  
Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General (July – December 2020)  
Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre,  
Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat

## The Secretariat comprises the following departments:

- Office of the Secretary General and Central Services
- Conflict Prevention Centre
- Transnational Threats Department
- Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
- Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
- Department of Human Resources
- Department of Management and Finance
- Office of Internal Oversight

1/ The amount covers the extrabudgetary expenditure of the entire Secretariat as listed above.  
2/ Actual expenditure figures do not include obligations.

# Office of the Secretary General and Central Services

Director: Ambassador Luca Fratini (as of February 2020)  
Budget: €11,376,600 (Unified budget), €508,228 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 101 (including 2 under extrabudgetary projects)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat](http://www.osce.org/secretariat)  
[www.osce.org/documentation-centre-in-prague](http://www.osce.org/documentation-centre-in-prague)

The Office of the Secretary General (OSG) is a provider of central services, a manager of programmes and a policy adviser for the OSCE Chairmanship and the Secretary General, including in his or her role as the OSCE's Chief Administrative Officer. In response to the unprecedented situation created by the coronavirus, the Crisis Management Team, chaired by the Director of the Office of the Secretary General, supported the development and communication of a responsible and consistent approach to the pandemic, prioritizing the protection of OSCE staff while ensuring business continuity.

## UPHOLDING CRITICAL OPERATIONS

A number of functions performed by the Office of the Secretary General and Central Services were critical to maintaining business continuity during the pandemic. Conference and Language Services quickly adjusted to the challenges of social distancing by adopting online technologies to enable the OSCE decision-making bodies to meet. Starting in April, and under the guidance of their respective Chairmanships, the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation were running online – with simultaneous interpretation in all six official OSCE languages.

Security Management played a key part in the OSCE's early-warning system, continuously providing updates and recommendations on preventive measures as situations evolved.

With support from Executive Management, the Secretary General managed the overall response to the pandemic, and under the guidance of the Albanian Chair, informed participating States about contingency planning and duty-of-care responsibilities.

The Office of Legal Affairs dealt with a number of complex queries from the OSCE Chairmanship, participating States and executive structures that involved deviations from established practice due to the exceptional circumstances.

"On the one hand, we miss the in-person negotiations and diplomacy, but, on the other hand, working remotely has brought some benefits. Teleworking has notably sped up communication with the OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague. Instant online availability has also meant that exchanges with ODIHR in Warsaw, the High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague and the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Secretariat in Vienna have become more frequent."

**Ambassador Luca Fratini,**  
Director of the Office of the Secretary General

"Like most parents, I found working from home really hard during the lockdown phases. Supervising home schooling, preparing extra meals and providing recreational outlets for my children meant that the interruptions were constant. The Organization implemented gender-sensitive practices for remote working, which were based on recommendations provided by the Human Resources Department and the Gender Issues Programme, and were really helpful. What also made teleworking easier was the team. We were probably closer than ever, supporting each other at all times."

**Mersiha Causevic Podzic**  
Communications and Media Relations Section

Communications and Media Relations quickly set up a COVID-19 portal on the OSCE website to provide information and share stories from the field on the OSCE's support to the participating States. The visiting groups programme was also moved online.

External Co-operation intensified its contacts with other organizations to share information on responses to the COVID-19 crisis. This helped leverage the capacities of each organization and enabled effective co-ordination of human resource policies and substantive responses – for example, on medical evacuation from affected regions.

The OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague moved its outreach and education activities online, including a unique exhibition on the Paris Summit and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. Despite the difficult travel conditions, researchers from seven participating States came to study the Centre's archives. They were supported by the Centre's staff while all safety measures were applied.



At an online team meeting of the Office of the Secretary General, 15 December 2020. (OSCE)



Staff members in the Secretary General's front office wearing a mask at work to protect those around them, Vienna 10 June 2020. (OSCE)

### YOUNG ACADEMICS ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAMME OF THE OSCE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE IN PRAGUE

"The scope of available documents related to the topic of conflict regulation and the support of the archive assistant and the entire team greatly helped me to advance in my doctoral dissertation."

**Julia Kołodziejska,**  
Poland, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland

"The unique collection of documents coupled with a family atmosphere and professional support in the Centre provided me with an excellent research space."

**Jakub Csabay,**  
Slovakia, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

"I'm glad to have been the first Albanian doctoral researcher to attend the programme, and I encourage the academic community interested in the OSCE to also follow this path."

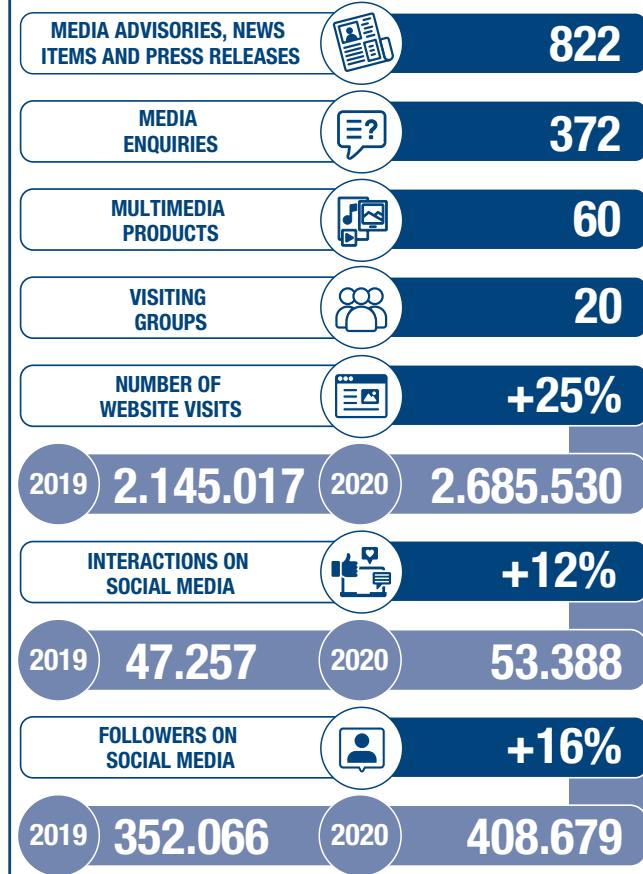
**Eni Lamçë,**  
Albania, University of Vienna

### ADDRESSING NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES CREATED BY THE PANDEMIC

Beyond their focus on the Organization's functional capabilities in times of crisis, sections of the OSG also provided analyses of the coronavirus's implications for comprehensive security across the OSCE region. The Office consistently advocated for OSCE participating States to adopt an inclusive and gender-responsive approach to the COVID-19 response and recovery by addressing the specific needs of women and men as well as young people.

The Gender Issues Programme immediately responded to reports of rising rates of domestic violence throughout the OSCE region at the onset of lockdowns by tackling the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on women. In co-operation with the OSG Adviser on Youth and Security, the Gender Issues Programme also promoted intergenerational discussions on the specific needs and potential contributions of youth in the current crisis.

### COMMUNICATING THE OSCE – 2020 VISIBILITY DATA



The Executive Management's Strategic Policy Support Unit initiated a conversation on strategic foresight to encourage more forward-looking and long-term perspectives, organized a Security Days round table to encourage reflection on the lessons of the 1990 Paris Charter and contributed to the OSCE's analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic's implications for all dimensions of security in the OSCE area.

# Conflict prevention

Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre: Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä  
(as of 17 February 2020)

Budget: €5,282,500 (Unified budget), €2,169,787 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 65 (including 9 under extrabudgetary projects)

[www.osce.org/secretariat/conflict-prevention](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/conflict-prevention)

**The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) is the main point of contact on matters concerning OSCE field operations. It addresses all phases of the conflict cycle by providing policy and operational guidance and advice, including through early warning and support of the OSCE's response in crisis situations and through efforts to find lasting political settlements for existing conflicts. The CPC is also a core structure of OSCE work in the politico-military dimension and provides Organization-wide support for project management.**

## ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The CPC continued its role in co-ordination of the OSCE response to the crisis in and around Ukraine, including by supporting efforts to stabilize the security situation and foster implementation of the Minsk agreements. In 2020, much of its support to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine focused on balancing the duty of care in relation to mission members with continued delivery of its mandated tasks. The CPC further assisted the Trilateral Contact Group with the aim of supporting and consolidating the ceasefire from late July 2020 and supporting efforts to build on the ceasefire. In addition, it supported the work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk.

Following the resurgence of open conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020, the CPC stepped up its support with increased information-sharing and communication, in particular with the Albanian Chair, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, as well as other elements of the OSCE Minsk Process.

It backed efforts by the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

## HELPING CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN GEORGIA

Through a grant from the OSCE Charity Ball Fund, the CPC, in co-operation with the municipality of Gori and the local NGO Zrda, helped to rebuild the destroyed wing of a kindergarten in the village of Kveshi, near Ergneti, where the IPRM meetings co-facilitated by the OSCE take place. The improved and enlarged building provides a better and safer environment for about 80 boys and girls, including from surrounding villages, as well as a venue for community meetings. On 25 September 2020, Special Representative Rudolf Michalka joined CPC colleagues for the official opening, and thanked the mayor of Gori and other partners for their work and engagement in this isolated area.

for the Transnistrian Settlement Process to facilitate implementation of outstanding points of the "package of eight", a list of measures agreed by the Sides in 2017. In addition, it supported efforts to reach agreement on further measures.

The CPC also worked closely with the Special Representative for the South Caucasus and continued to contribute to the active involvement of the OSCE in the IPRM in Ergneti and the Geneva International Discussions dealing with the consequences of the 2008 war in Georgia.

## SUPPORTING FIELD OPERATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

The CPC supported the work of field operations in Central Asia and the two regional flagship projects, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe. It also facilitated steps to enhance the Academy's co-operation with field operations and bolster its regional impact.

On both Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, the CPC provided advice to the Chair, the Secretary General and field operations and facilitated OSCE responses to developments in the region. In particular, the CPC invested efforts toward strengthening regional and cross-dimensional approaches and co-ordination between OSCE structures.

## RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the CPC intensified co-ordination between the Secretariat and OSCE field operations to support them in ensuring the safety and welfare of staff, assess the impact of the crisis on field-operation mandate implementation, facilitate contingency planning, and share lessons and good practices in crisis response. It established a working group that provided tailored responses to the needs of field operations in accordance with local conditions and measures taken by host governments. Leveraging the expertise of the Secretariat, the CPC facilitated responses to the broad spectrum of issues facing field operations, including stress management, medical evacuation, remote working and ICT challenges.

## A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN CENTRAL ASIA



OSCE Academy in Bishkek Alumna Alimana Zhanmukanova, 3 December 2020. (OSCE)

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek serves and is developing a new generation of young professionals in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Mongolia and across the OSCE region. The CPC Central Asia Desk supports the Academy by providing policy advice, raising awareness of its activities and encouraging further support from participating States.

The CPC hosts an Academy intern each year, and this year welcomed Ms. Alimana Zhanmukanova, an MA in Politics and Security student from Kazakhstan, although the pandemic meant her internship with the Central Asia Desk was conducted remotely. “*The CPC provided me with comprehensive professional training on working in a diplomatic, international and political sphere. I was involved on the same level as its staff members, providing me with the opportunity for both professional and personal growth. This internship was the best experience of my MA Programme at the Academy*”, Alimana commented.

## REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME



Zora Vojvodic and her family receive the keys to their new apartment from the then-Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Andrea Oriizio. After more than 20 years, the Vojvodic family finally have a place they can call home, Belgrade, 20 June 2019. (RHP)

The Regional Housing Programme (RHP) addresses the plight of refugees that followed the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. The OSCE, with the UNHCR and the EU, supported the negotiations that led to a political agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia to jointly close the refugee file in the region and develop the RHP. By the end of August 2020, more than 7,500 vulnerable refugee or internally displaced families (around 22,500 people) had received a housing solution.

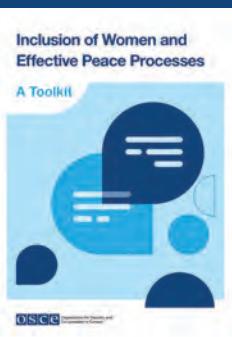
The war had a devastating effect on every family selected for assistance, since their original properties were destroyed, and they were forced to leave their homes. The OSCE works closely with the four partner countries and other RHP stakeholders to support the beneficiaries as they begin a new and dignified life. Beneficiaries come from the most vulnerable groups of displaced persons from the four countries.

## EARLY WARNING

The CPC promotes a structured and systematic approach to early warning across the Organization through the Network of Early Warning Focal Points in field operations and other executive structures. In 2020, it organized the Network's ninth annual meeting in a blended format,

gathering 40 members of the Network for information-sharing and capacity-building. It also continued to facilitate online conflict analysis workshops, alongside regional meetings and events focused on the OSCE's conflict cycle toolbox.

## MEDIATION SUPPORT



The Mediation Support Team (MST) is the main resource for mediation and dialogue facilitation support within the OSCE. In this role, it provided thematic advice and operational support to OSCE participants in negotiation and conflict management formats, such as the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, the Transnistrian settlement process and the Geneva International Discussions, including strategic retreats for incoming special representatives and their teams. The MST shared operational guidance on the implications of COVID-19 for peace process design and the use of digital tools for mediation. In addition, it organized tailored workshops for field operations on mediation and dialogue facilitation. In co-operation with the Gender Section and field operations, it advanced implementation of the publication *Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes: A Toolkit*, including by disseminating a Russian-language version.

## CPC PROJECT AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT SUPPORT IN 2020

**248**

TOTAL ACTIVE EXTRA BUDGETARY PROJECTS



**256.7** WORTH

€ MILLION

As of 31 October 2020

### REVIEW OF NEW PROJECTS & AMENDMENTS

**78**

EXTRABUDGETARY PROJECT PROPOSALS



**88.8** WORTH

€ MILLION

→ **48** PROJECTS FROM FIELD OPERATIONS



**60.4** WORTH

€ MILLION

INCLUDING **17** VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE SPECIAL MONITORING MISSION TO UKRAINE

**30** SECRETARIAT PROJECTS



**28.4** WORTH

€ MILLION

### TRAINING

**376**

OSCE STAFF MEMBERS



**15** TRAINING SESSIONS



### FACILITATION

**6**

MEETINGS OF THE NETWORK OF PROJECT PRACTITIONERS



CPC PESU analysis 2020

In 2020, the CPC set up a network of project practitioners and updated project templates, including by introducing a gender marker and a section on the project's contribution to the attainment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

## SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE/REFORM (SSG/R)

The OSCE has a long history of supporting participating States in strengthening the governance of their security sectors. This support reflects the Organization's comprehensive approach to security and is a tool for fostering lasting peace and security in the OSCE area. SSG/R remains a nationally owned process, in which OSCE support is demand-driven and at the request of participating States.

In 2020, the CPC continued working towards a more coherent and co-ordinated approach to SSG/R by strengthening internal capacities, providing conceptual and operational support to executive structures and, on request, building capacities in participating States. For example, the CPC:

- conducted a comprehensive needs assessment in Bosnia and Herzegovina to enhance a cross-

## MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS 24/7

The Situation/Communications Room monitors developments affecting security and stability in the OSCE area, serving as a vital link in the chain between the Secretariat and field operations. In 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and an unprecedented number of crises, the Situation/Communications Room played an indispensable role in the Organization's emergency and crisis co-ordination, issuing a record number of outputs:

- 626 daily morning and afternoon briefings prepared on working days and official holidays when required;
- 2,085 updates and special reports; and
- 13,306 alert messages.

dimensional approach to addressing security sector priorities;

- implemented initiatives to strengthen good security sector governance in Armenia and Uzbekistan; and
- delivered SSG/R training to more than 100 staff from OSCE field operations.

## SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICO-MILITARY COMMITMENTS

The FSC Support and the Communications and Technology Units support participating States in implementing Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs), which cover a wide variety of instruments to increase peace and stability in Europe. These include the Vienna Document, addressing military force postures and activities; documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SCA); the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security; and the Principles related to Non-Proliferation on Aspects of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Under COVID-19 conditions, the verification of military activities largely came to a standstill while most of the FSC's other work was carried out online.

## CHEMICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY IN UKRAINE

The Conflict Prevention Centre and the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, with financial support from the European Union and the United States of America, have implemented chemical safety and security projects since 2017. The projects take place under the umbrella of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, which obliges all states to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.

As part of the project "Strengthening controls over cross-boundary movement of controlled and toxic chemicals", Ukraine's State Customs Service and State Border Guard Service obtained protective equipment to help train staff in countering chemical threats. Protective suits and masks were also dispatched to border control points with the highest risk of COVID-19 infection in an effort to protect Ukraine's customs and border authorities against the coronavirus.



Staff members from the Ukraine's State Border Guard Service and State Customs Service in protective gear provided by the OSCE in the framework of a project to support the country's control over transboundary movement of chemicals, Kyiv, 9 December 2020. (OSCE/Andrii Dziubenko)

## SCHOLARSHIP FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

The annual OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme, a joint OSCE–United Nations Office of Disarmament (UNODA) initiative, encourages young people, particularly women, to participate in the security sector. Its third edition provided 150 scholarships to young professionals, in particular women, to increase their awareness and understanding of academic, conceptual and analytical issues in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, with a focus on the OSCE and its instruments.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the training course was held online from April to June 2020. The programme taught participants' professional skills, broadened their perspectives and contributed to creating equal opportunities for women's participation in policy-making, planning and implementation processes in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

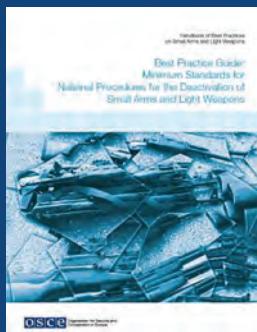
Yuliia, a participant from Ukraine, commented: *"I think the inspiration and networking with fellow females from the same field largely contributed significantly to my current success. As mine action is a traditionally male-dominated environment, it was so important to know that there are many successful women in the field, both at the beginning of their careers and in leadership positions. Also, the course changed my own initial perception of how important and relevant gender-related issues are."*

## SHARING INFORMATION AMONG PARTICIPATING STATES

The CPC facilitates the secure exchange of information between and among participating States – crucial in building confidence and trust. This includes military information as well as cyber-related information. The

OSCE Communications Network, established by the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, is key in facilitating this dialogue. In the past year, the Communications Network facilitated the exchange of over 430,000 messages between participating States.

## OSCE BEST PRACTICE GUIDES IN THE AREA OF SALW AND CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION



The OSCE's guides on SALW and conventional ammunition (CA) aim to help prevent their reaching illicit markets and terrorist and criminal groups. The guides complement other international guidance and provide participating States and field operations with common standards for weapons and ammunition controls when implementing assistance projects, developing legislation and building national capacities.

Participating States launched a review and update of the guides in late 2019 and continued their discussions throughout 2020, taking into account lessons learned from applying the guides at field operations and in projects. Although the pandemic affected the pace of the review and update process, a guide on deactivation of SALW was adopted to help preventing the reactivation of weapons and to contribute to combating trafficking.



Participants during the OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security Programme, Vienna, 8 May 2019. (UNODA)

# Transnational threats

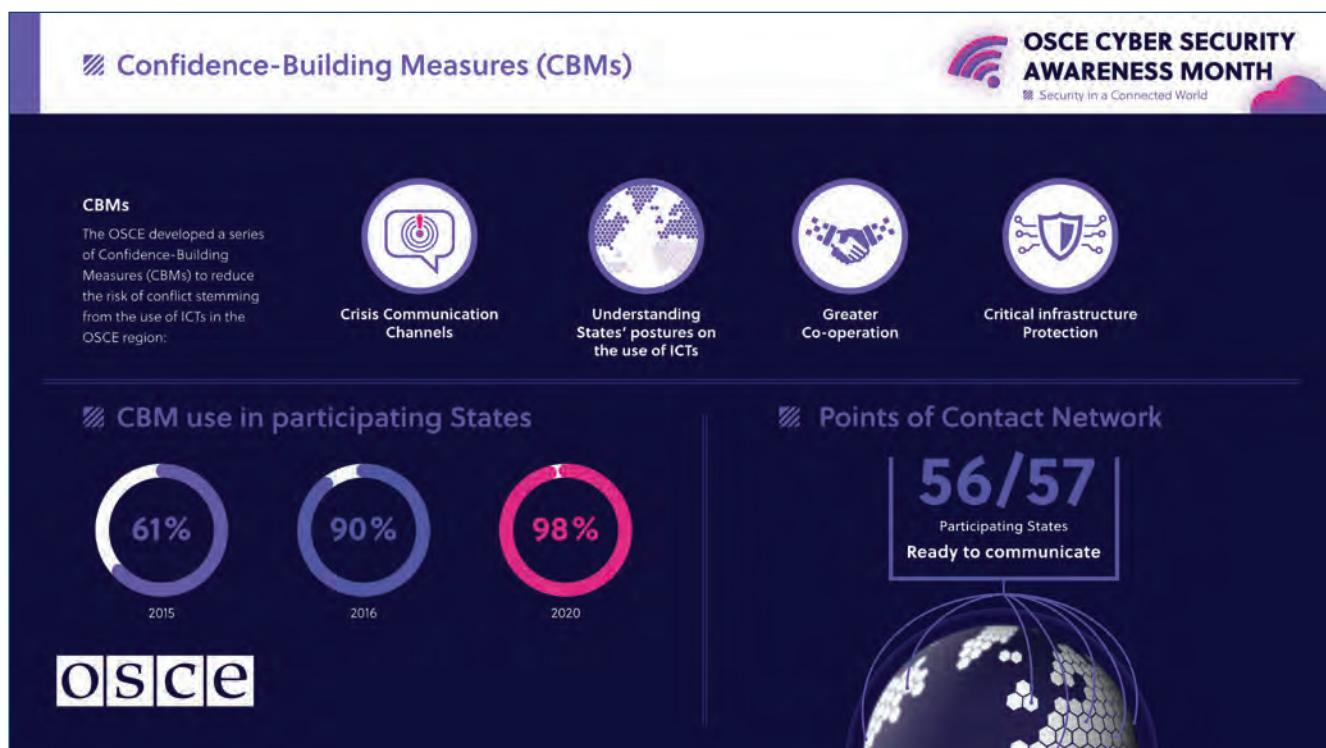
Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats: Ambassador Alena Kupchyna  
Budget: €2,941,800 (Unified budget), €1,549,129 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 50 (including 18 under extrabudgetary projects)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/cyber-ict-security](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/cyber-ict-security)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/terrorism](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/terrorism)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/policing](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/policing)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/borders](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/borders)  
<https://polis.osce.org>

The OSCE's Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) supported OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation in their efforts to address transnational threats in 2020. The Department provided assistance in fulfilling political commitments through effective and sustainable activities such as convening joint expert meetings, sharing information and best practices, and delivering capacity-building projects. TNTD consists of a Co-ordination Cell, which also deals with cyber/information and communication technology (ICTs) security, and three thematic units: the Action against Terrorism Unit, the Border Security and Management Unit and the Strategic Police Matters Unit.

## CYBER/ICT SECURITY

In response to a pandemic unprecedented in modern times, professional, economic, medical and personal activities have started migrating to cyberspace at an ever-faster rate. Unfortunately, the benefits of this transformation have been mirrored by the growing scope, number and impact of cyberthreats targeting both individuals and critical infrastructures. The world has largely risen to this challenge, and while in-person activities, especially diplomacy and trust-building, can never be replaced, proactive and frequent exchanges of information and best practices on cyber/ICT security have done much to preserve, and even advance, processes such as the OSCE cyber confidence-building measures (CBMs).

TNTD has not only adapted to the emerging situation but has also found a new digital voice that will outlast the disruptions caused by COVID-19. TNTD has moved its trust- and confidence-building activities online, while increasing their frequency, hosting over a dozen events in the second half of 2020 alone. The Department continued to support the network of national policy and technical Points of Contact as it added new members, tools, exercises and activities. Numerous lectures and discussions with leading experts on the topics of critical infrastructure protection, public-private partnerships and international cyber exercises were organized. An e-learning module that will allow policymakers, technical appointees and interested individuals to learn the most pertinent facts about the CBM process from the safety of their homes



is being developed. Finally, for the first time ever, the OSCE participated in the global Cybersecurity Awareness Month in October, organizing a series of webinars aimed at boosting awareness and improving cyber hygiene throughout the region.

These kinds of online activities are not just a holdover until better days return. Rather, they will continue supplementing TNTD's in-person events, making stakeholders more connected, informed, engaged and secure.

### **"LIVE FROM THE BORDER" NEW PODCAST INITIATIVE**

The COVID-19 outbreak had disruptive effects on the freedom of movement of people and goods across borders, affecting the usual operation of border security and management agencies in the OSCE area and beyond.

The front-line officers at border checkpoints were the first to confront this new reality and to face numerous challenges, from restricted access to border-crossing for people and goods, to safe communication with travellers while performing their duties. Furthermore, front-line officers had to address specific questions and requests from people wishing to cross borders despite the restrictive measures.

In a new series of podcasts, TNTD interviewed front-line officers at borders and experts from the OSCE and other international organizations in an effort to provide insights into the operational realities on the ground.

Apart from the topics mentioned earlier, the podcast series tackles issues such as travel and freedom of movement under the current exceptional circumstances in an effort to provide simple answers to difficult questions.

### **PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING POLICE EFFORTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

To foster peace and security in every OSCE dimension, it is essential that women and men enjoy equal rights. Disparities between men and women are deeply rooted and exacerbated by crises, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic. Law enforcement can play a key role in



A female officer from Montenegro's border police patrolling the blue border. The photo was taken as part of a campaign to encourage women to join the police, Lake Skadar, 28 November 2020. (MFILM/OSCE)

reducing gender inequality. TNTD has been working to reinforce the involvement of women in policing and the capacities of law enforcement and justice actors in combating gender-based violence.

In June 2020, TNTD concluded a pilot project on strengthening the capacities of criminal justice practitioners to combat gender-based violence, reaching out to more than 15,000 law enforcement and justice practitioners and 5 million potential victims and bystanders from Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. This important achievement opened the way for the implementation of a similar project in South-Eastern Europe in partnership with the OSCE field operations in the region.

At the same time, TNTD launched a project on increasing and supporting the participation of women at all levels of policing, with pilot activities starting in Montenegro. The police should represent the society they serve, but the underrepresentation of women in the police across the OSCE area at the strategic, policy and operational levels continues to be a challenge. TNTD systematically promotes gender equality within law enforcement by leveraging its community policing activities and the OSCE Police Academies Network. The promotion of gender equality includes mainstreaming a gender perspective in all activities of the politico-military dimension and supporting the efforts of law enforcement agencies to achieve gender equality and thus to contribute to societal change.

### **OSCE–UNODC TRAINING PROGRAMME ON COUNTERING TERRORIST FINANCING**

Countering terrorism financing is one of the OSCE's five main counter-terrorism commitments, and it is fundamental to a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach to addressing transnational terrorist threats. Since 2017, the OSCE–UNODC multi-year training programme on countering terrorist financing has been making an impact on the ground, leading to institutional reforms, as well as to strengthened interagency and multi-stakeholder co-operation to uncover and financially disrupt terrorist networks.

The OSCE–UNODC training programme aims to increase the capacity of countries to detect and combat



#### **PODCAST QUOTES FROM THE BORDER**

"The main challenge was to handle a balance between following the instructions deriving from 'corona laws and regulations' and to treat people in a humane way."

**Inspector Franz Zeiner**

Unit for Migration and Document Control,  
Austrian Police – podcast episode 3

"[The] challenges have been many; we have been caught by surprise. ... We were faced with new types of crimes mainly carried out via the Internet."

**Chief Commissar Erjola Borova**

Specialist Sector of Risk Analyses/Department for Border and Migration, Albanian State Police – podcast episode 8

All 14 podcast episodes can be found on the OSCE POLIS platform at <https://polis.osce.org/live-borders-podcast-episode-1>

terrorist financing and strengthen compliance with international standards in this area, such as UN Security Council resolutions, Financial Action Task Force on money laundering (FATF) standards, UN norms and OSCE commitments to promote human rights-based approaches in countering terrorist financing.

About 200 participants from South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia have benefited from this training programme implemented by TNTD in co-operation with the OSCE field operations. In 2020, nine train-the-trainer and training courses were organized for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



Participants at an OSCE-UNODC-run training on countering terrorist financing, Ashgabat, 1 June 2020. (UNODC)



The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, addresses the OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference by video, Vienna, 14 September 2020. (OSCE/Micky Kröll)

## MAJOR EVENTS

### **11 AND 12 FEBRUARY 2020, VIENNA:**

Joint Regional High-level Conference on Foreign Terrorist Fighters – Addressing Current Challenges (400 participants) (with UNOCT)

### **15 JUNE 2020, ONLINE EVENT:**

OSCE Cyber/ICT Security Day (165 participants)

### **7 AND 8 SEPTEMBER 2020, VIENNA AND ONLINE:**

OSCE-wide Cyber/ICT Security Conference 2020: Fostering Co-operation for a Stable Cyber/ICT Environment (200 participants)

### **14 AND 15 SEPTEMBER 2020, VIENNA AND ONLINE:**

OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference: Effective Partnerships against Terrorism and Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (500 participants)

### **28 SEPTEMBER 2020, VIENNA AND ONLINE:**

2020 OSCE Annual Police Experts Meeting (210 participants)

### **5 OCTOBER 2020, VIENNA AND ONLINE:**

OSCE High-level Conference on Addressing Organized Crime through Strategic Partnerships (250 participants)

### **6 OCTOBER 2020, VIENNA AND ONLINE:**

2020 OSCE-wide Conference on Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors (200 participants)

### **27 AND 28 OCTOBER 2020, VIENNA AND ONLINE:**

14th Annual Meeting of the OSCE Border Security and Management National Focal Points Network (108 participants)

### **29–30 OCTOBER 2020, ONLINE:**

4th OSCE-wide Seminar on Passenger Data Exchange (280 participants), jointly with UNOCT

# Economic and environmental activities

Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities: Ambassador Vuk Žugić  
Budget: €2,343,700 (Unified budget), €1,554,556 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 21  
<https://www.osce.org/oceea>  
[www.osce.org/economic-activities](http://www.osce.org/economic-activities)  
[www.osce.org/environmental-activities](http://www.osce.org/environmental-activities)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/eeforum](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/eeforum)

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) adapted quickly to the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF) and the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting (EEDIM) as well as many programmatic activities were held in virtual or hybrid formats. In addition, the OCEEA developed a series of webinars on the pandemic's impacts on the second dimension.

## SUPPORTING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY POLICIES

The EEF, the second dimension's main policy event, focused on promoting security, stability and economic growth in the OSCE area by preventing and combating corruption through innovation, increased transparency and digitalization. Discussions prepared the ground for the "Decision on Preventing and Combating Corruption through Digitalization and Increased Transparency", agreed upon at the Ministerial Council meeting. The EEDIM reviewed OSCE commitments in the field of disaster risk reduction, with discussions ranging from strengthening disaster risk reduction and management, through exchanging knowledge and best practices to improving early warning, preparedness and response capacities.

In a difficult operational environment, the OCEEA continued to support participating States in the implementation of their commitments in the economic and environmental dimension with the aim of strengthening security and stability, building confidence and contributing to prevent conflicts and tensions in the OSCE area. While many activities could not be held as planned originally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were successfully turned into online formats.

The OCEEA offered support to promote good governance and a positive business climate, with a focus on preventing and combating corruption; ensuring asset recovery and seizure; fostering connectivity, through trade and transport facilitation; and tackling socio-economic disparities, through effective migration governance, economic empowerment of women, and human capital development. The OCEEA conducted consultations, in partnership with the UNECE Transport Division, on Eurasia Transport Links, which would result in collective action for fast, secure, affordable, reliable and environmental friendly overland transport and trade between Europe and Asia.

The OCEEA also continued its support for activities on transboundary water co-operation, disaster risk reduction, environmental good governance, hazardous waste management, energy security and potential security risks stemming from climate change. In co-operation with the Berlin-based think tank adelphi, the OCEEA conducted

consultations in South-Eastern Europe to identify and map potential climate-related security risks and to develop co-operative measures for risk reduction through a participatory process. While the originally planned workshops could not be held, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activity was turned into a series of online meetings and surveys, which generated successful results.

In response to the pandemic, the OCEEA also organized a series of webinars called "Learning and moving forward together" to discuss the economic and environmental impact of COVID-19 and ways the OSCE can support its participating States in coping with and recovering from the crisis. The webinars addressed issues such as environmental co-operation in the time of COVID-19; the impact of the pandemic on connectivity, trade and labour migration; and the potential of open data to enhance transparency and accountability. Moreover, in co-operation with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities a webinar was organized on the economic consequences of COVID-19 on national minorities.



Participants at the 28th meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum, Prague, 10 September 2020. (OSCE/Lubomir Kotek)

## BUSINESS FOR A GOOD CAUSE – SUPPORTING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH THE WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTRES IN ARMENIA



Nazareth Seferian is an expert in sustainable business and social entrepreneurship

The Canadian expert Nazareth Seferian, a Cambridge and Oxford graduate, is a consultant for the OCEEA’s extrabudgetary project “Economic empowerment of women in Syunik region and other regions of Armenia”. He builds the entrepreneurial capacities of the network of Women’s Resource Centres (WRCs) in Armenia to establish and run social businesses. The following is a transcript of an interview with Mr. Seferian about the significance of a social entrepreneurship approach for civil society organizations.

### **Mr. Seferian, let’s start from the beginning: what is “social enterprise”?**

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus defines “social enterprise” as a business “*whose objective is to address social, economic and environmental challenges through an entrepreneurial approach*”. Social business inverts

the relative priorities of profitability and social impact. Yet, a social business must be financially self-sustaining, requiring from those who run it a series of conventional business capabilities, such as market-oriented thinking, innovativeness and a managerial mindset, combined with a deep understanding of societal issues and the willingness to move from the maximization of profit towards people-centred, participatory, inclusive, fair and sustainable business approaches.

### **Why is a social economy approach relevant for a civil society organization (CSO) such as the network of WRCs?**

The social business model can offer a viable balance between social objectives and financial goals, allowing CSOs to gain greater financial sustainability to pursue their societal transformation objectives. Furthermore, social enterprises usually offer an enabling environment for vulnerable groups to (re-) enter the labour market, empowering those left behind and providing opportunities for quality jobs. The WRC network is determined to pool the potentialities of the social business model to enhance women’s economic participation and catalyse the attention of public entities on the need to rethink economic development towards more sustainable and inclusive patterns. Today, this is even more important in view of the disruptive impact of COVID-19 on world economy.

### **Can you provide some concrete examples of social enterprises run by WRCs?**

WRCs are developing social businesses in three areas: textiles, eco-tourism/hospitality and education services for children and teenagers. During the training, we delved into business planning and management, social branding, social marketing and innovation. The aim is to ensure that products and services provided by WRCs fully reflect the values and mission of the network so that customers feel like they are part of something bigger, that they are contributing to social change and transformation. Developing a social brand helps increase loyalty on the part of employees, customers and community members. With greater loyalty comes greater profitability – for a good cause. Making full use of innovation and digital technologies is an integral part of this effort.

### **The OCEEA hired you in 2020 to improve the social entrepreneurial skills of WRCs. How were you able to perform your tasks in times of COVID-19?**

Surprisingly enough, online webinars offered more than one opportunity: a greater focus on the needs of each WRC and each participant, more flexibility to meet when more suitable, greater interactivity due to the limited number of participants and more rounds of discussions according to the participants’ requests and demands. To make online events effective, a great deal of preparatory work was necessary. Based on a preliminary needs assessment, the overall plan of webinars, challenges and opportunities as well as expected results were discussed extensively and repeatedly with the OCEEA project team, always online.

By combining profit with keen attention to the impact on individuals as well as the social and natural environments, the social economy business model offers a suitable approach to rebalance socio-economic disparities. The OCEEA discussed this approach throughout 2020, particularly in light of the pressing policy dilemmas triggered by COVID-19 and the need to plan a post-pandemic recovery that can foster social cohesion and economic inclusion, particularly of the most vulnerable such as women, youth, minorities and migrants.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR REMEDIATION OF URANIUM LEGACY SITES IN KYRGYZSTAN

In 2020, the OCEEA in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented the project “Stakeholder Engagement for Uranium Legacy Remediation in Central Asia, Phase II”, funded under the EU Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation programme.

Within the project, the OSCE is responsible for public awareness-raising and community outreach activities, most of which are implemented by the Aarhus Centres in Osh under the guidance of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and in close partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan, the UNDP, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Rosatom. The OSCE supported the three Public Environmental Information Centres in Mailuu-Suu, Shekaftar and Min-Kush to ensure that more than 10,000 local residents were able to receive up-to-date and official information and guidance regarding remediation works and radiation safety, and they had the opportunity to raise their concerns on these measures.

As part of a project focused on public participation in decision-making processes, 42 representatives from the municipalities of Min-Kush and Shekaftar as well as local community members participated in an experience exchange visit to Mailuu-Suu to study best practices and experiences in engaging the local population during the remediation of uranium legacy sites. During the open-air event, participants visited the remediated sites of former uranium tailings, dumps and production facilities, where local residents and authorities shared their experiences and talked about the challenges they faced during remediation works in their area. They stressed the importance of regular and timely awareness-raising activities among the population about ongoing and planned works. Furthermore, around 5,000 copies of information materials on planned remediation works at uranium legacy sites and radiation safety and legislative documents concerning public participation during

the remediation process, such as posters, booklets, banners and guidelines, were distributed among the local population.

For Kanat Almanbetov, head of the Min-Kush municipality, outreach to the public is essential for the success of the remediation process: *“The issue of radiation safety has been a problem for many years in our country. District authorities and members of the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan have raised this problem with the Government. At the beginning of the rehabilitation works at the uranium legacy sites of Min-Kush, the majority of the population did not trust the hired companies, but conducting awareness-raising activities for the local population helped change their views.”*

In addition, the OSCE provided expert support to the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan to develop a national programme on involving and informing the population in matters related to radiation safety and the rehabilitation of uranium tailings for 2021–2024. A survey was conducted among 65 representatives of governmental organizations, local residents and NGOs on the issue of information and the involvement of the local population in rehabilitation activities, and 14 meetings were held with representatives of government agencies, international organizations and other partners. The programme includes an analysis of the current situation, priority work methods, a detailed action plan and monitoring and evaluation tools, and it identifies sources of funding for the implementation of the programme.

*“Long-term planning for stakeholder engagement during the implementation of the rehabilitation projects at uranium legacy sites plays an important role in raising the awareness of the local population on radiation safety measures. It will also help to formulate the Ministry of Emergency Situations’ 2021–2024 programme with a focus on public participation in uranium legacy sites management processes”, said Asel Saitkazieva, Deputy Director of the Tailings Management Agency under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan.*

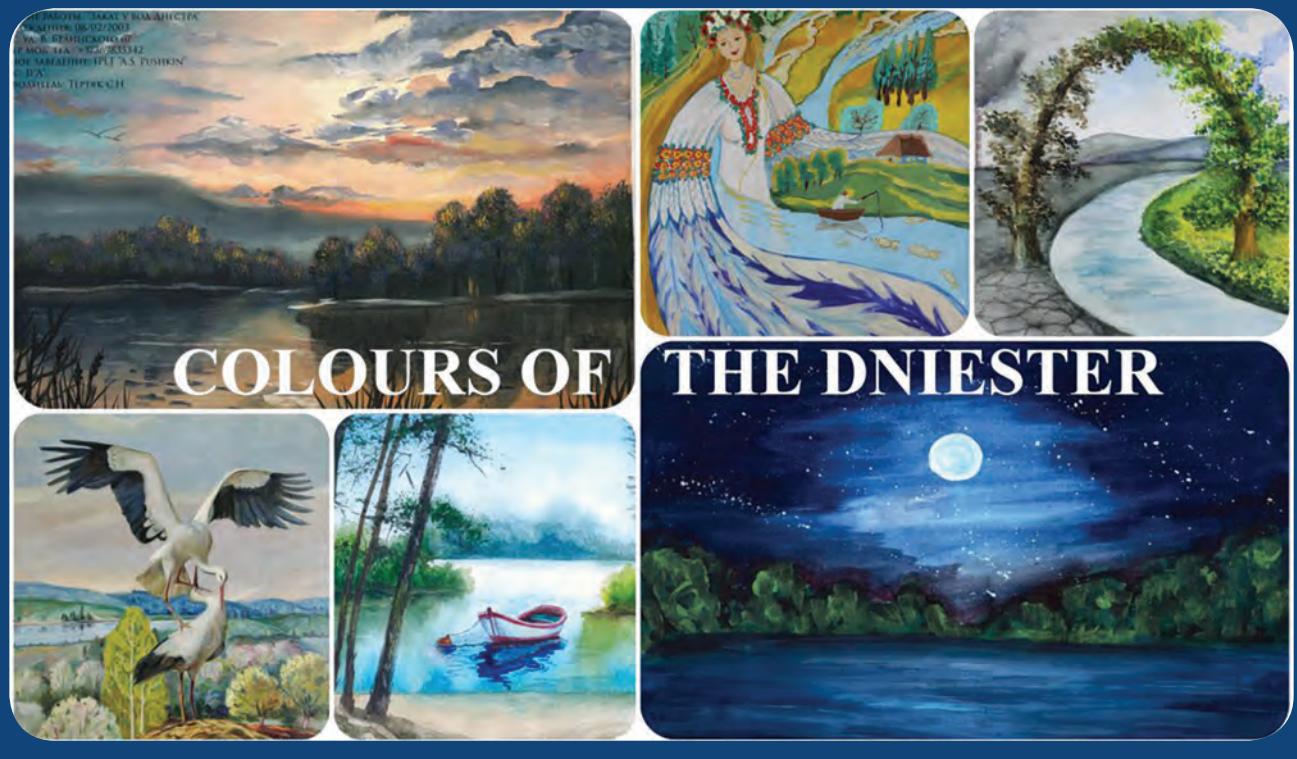


Local residents at an OSCE-provided information board about remediation works and radiation safety, Shekaftar, Kyrgyzstan, 9 July 2020. (OSCE)

## **“COLOURS OF THE DNIESTER”**

As part of the OSCE’s long-term assistance to Moldova and Ukraine in facilitating transboundary co-operation in the Dniester River basin, a number of activities have been organized, starting in 2004, to promote public participation, effective communication and awareness-raising in the area of environmental protection in the Dniester basin. The engagement of youth is an integral component of these activities, also with a view to contributing to the formation of an environmentally conscious generation of young people.

One of these activities is the basin-wide contest of creativity “Colours of the Dniester”, organized annually since 2008. Its main goal is to interest schoolchildren and students in conservation and environmental management of the Dniester basin in a creative manner. The competition is held in various categories, such as drawing, photography, video, short story, poetry, non-fiction and measures to improve water resources. The 2020 edition of the contest was held under the motto “The climate is changing – the Dniester is always with us!” The organizers of the contest, which include national and local water authorities, NGOs as well as schoolteachers in both Moldova and Ukraine, received over 600 individual works, 95 of which were awarded in various categories. Due to restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the contest commission meetings were held remotely, and the selection of entries was conducted in a hybrid format. The contest is one vivid example of an activity that brings people together with a common goal. While the works submitted for the contest were diverse and varied in capturing different aspects of life in the Dniester River basin, all entries shared genuine consideration for environmental protection of the Dniester and the idea of its long-term preservation.



# Combating trafficking in human beings

Special Representative and Co-ordinator: **Valiant Richey**

Budget: €1,106,600 (Unified budget), €61,372 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 14

<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/trafficking>

[@osce\\_cthb](https://twitter.com/osce_cthb)

The Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) assists the OSCE participating States in their efforts to prevent human trafficking, investigate and prosecute perpetrators and protect victims. In 2020, it held its annual Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference, which is among the largest events dedicated to the issue. This year the Alliance focused on ending impunity and delivering justice by prosecuting trafficking in human beings; survivors' voices were placed at the heart of discussions. The Office also undertook a number of country visits, including to Ireland.

## "YOUR VOICE MATTERS": SURVIVORS SET THE TONE AT THE ALLIANCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS CONFERENCE

*"This is your statement, not ours."* "Really?" Really. When the Program Officer Anne-Lise Robin and the Office's consultant James Bergin told survivors of trafficking they could make their own statements at the conference, they could hardly believe it. This year's Alliance Conference was devoted to enhancing prosecution securing justice for victims across the OSCE region, and survivors' voices were at the heart of the event. The OSR/CTHB asked a number of them to send video messages to be broadcast throughout the conference, which became an opportunity to stop and listen to those voices and remind them that victims should always be the primary consideration of anti-trafficking efforts.

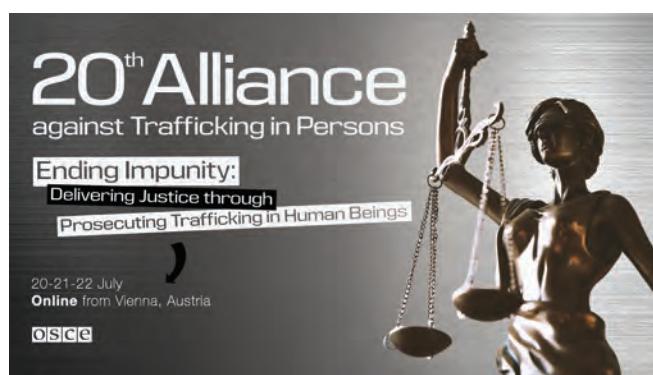
States have obligations to uphold, protect and promote the rights of victims of trafficking in human beings, and what better way to make this point than hearing from survivors themselves? When discussing gaps in the criminal justice system, victims and survivors of trafficking are in the best position to describe how the system has served them or let them down, and what their expectations are. They can inform policy development, and their insights and perspective lead to more effective and more sustainable action.

Having survivors describe their relationship with the criminal justice system was fundamental in ensuring that the outcome and recommendations of the conference were grounded in the real-life experiences of individuals who had lived through trafficking. Their statements added variety and richness to the conference. Ultimately, survivors' voices can help mobilize the most important ingredient in the fight against human trafficking: political will. Widespread impunity of traffickers continues to be a grave concern for the rule of law, security and safety in the OSCE region and it is most urgent to replace a culture of impunity with a culture of justice. That is why the OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings closed the conference by urging participating States to make a declaration of political will and to set concrete goals towards tripling the number of prosecutions of human trafficking cases within the next three years, in the hope that more victims of trafficking can become survivors.

To find out more about the conference and its recommendations, please visit <https://www.osce.org/cthb/457855>.

## THE TALE OF A COUNTRY VISIT

*"Just call us the Anti-trafficking Grandmas!"* the elderly woman piped up. *"Human trafficking grows thanks to those who pay for it and the witnesses who don't care about the victims and don't speak up. That's why we decided to speak up! We have been living in this area, and we know everybody here; the police officers cannot be everywhere all the time; we can help them."* The local activists OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey met in Dublin are a unique example of grass-roots commitment. Every day, they report suspicious signs of human trafficking – particularly sexual exploitation – occurring in their communities. *"Their engagement is proof of the 'whole of society approach' in preventing and combating human trafficking"*, says Tarana Baghirova of the OSR/CTHB.



Poster of the 20th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons conference. (OSCE)

Country visits are at the core of the Office of the Special Representative's mandate. They require extensive research, analysis and consultation and allow the Office to receive first-hand information, assess the situation on the ground, identify good practices and make practical recommendations to national authorities. In February 2020, the Special Representative visited Ireland to meet with civil society organizations, health and legal service providers, law enforcement representatives, prosecutors, legislators and government officials. He also visited shelters for adults and children and migrant reception facilities to evaluate the existing practical mechanisms for victim identification and protection.

"We don't go there to criticize, but to support", explains Andrea Salvoni from the Special Representative's team. "Governments are generally committed to combating human trafficking, and the OSCE's role is to assist them in this. Coming in with a red pen, telling them everything they do is wrong, will certainly not help them in identifying and supporting more victims or putting more traffickers behind bars. However, coming in with an open mind, and with

*the knowledge and expertise you have to offer, can help countries turn the tide."*

In Ireland, the OSR/CTHB delegation was met with openness and transparency. During the consultations, they observed that state and non-state actors were conscious of the issues, aware of what was missing and willing to work hard for solutions. "*Everywhere we went, we saw eagerness to improve their response and make use of our recommendations*", the OSR/CTHB colleagues recall.

Following country visits, the Office not only provides concrete recommendations but also helps with their implementation. "*Change requires both avenues: you need the right policies in place to address a problem, but you also need actors on the ground who are trained and committed to implementing those policies. The OSR/CTHB can bridge the two worlds and help combat human trafficking at every level*", concludes the OSCE Special Representative, Valiant Richey.



OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey during his country visit to Ireland, Dublin, 19 February 2020. (OSCE)

# Gender equality

Senior Adviser on Gender Issues: **Amarsanaa Darisuren**

Budget: €446,400 (Unified budget), €222,339 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 12 (including 3 under extrabudgetary projects)

[www.osce.org/secretariat/gender](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/gender)

**Gender equality is an important cross-dimensional component of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. The Organization has intensified its efforts to build internal capacities for mainstreaming gender in all of its programmes, activities and initiatives. It also continues to provide vital support to participating States in key areas such as implementing the women, peace and security agenda; combating violence against women and girls; and promoting the role of women in mitigating the negative impacts of natural disasters and environmental degradation.**

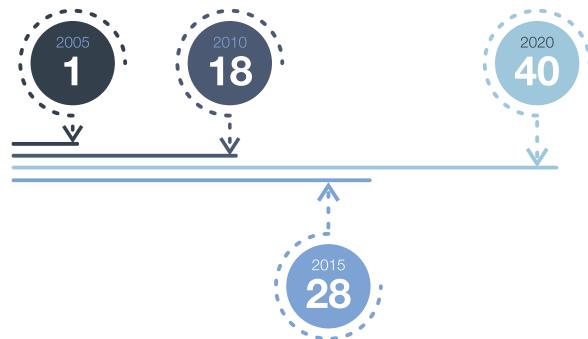
## 2020 – REVIEWING AND RENEWING COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY

The year 2020 was a pivotal one for gender equality, as the international community marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women, the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the global Sustainable Development Goals. In the context of global stocktaking, the OSCE Secretariat, together with the Albanian Chair-in-Office and ODIHR, held the third Gender Equality Review Conference (GERC) on 27–28 October 2020 in a fully virtual format. The Conference provided an opportunity for the OSCE to reflect on its own progress since the second Review Conference in 2017, on the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, and to set a course for future action.

The Conference focused on reviewing the implementation of OSCE commitments on gender equality during thematic working sessions covering women's participation in political and public life and in the security sector, as well as women's economic empowerment. A cross-section of over 300 representatives of OSCE participating States, executive structures, other intergovernmental institutions, civil society organizations and academia attended.

The Gender Issues Programme played an instrumental role in the review process. It prepared three thematic review papers on preventing and combating violence against women in the OSCE region, promoting equal opportunities in the economic sphere and women's participation in conflict prevention, and supporting crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction. ODIHR prepared a fourth review paper in the series on promoting women's participation in political and public life. The papers provided an overview of progress and highlighted gaps, challenges and recommendations for future action. They also served as food for thought for discussion and debate at the GERC. Based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the papers, the Gender Issues Programme organized a series of subregional and regional expert round-table meetings on eliminating violence against women and on women, peace and security, which continued into 2021.

## National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security in the OSCE region



In commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the women, peace and security agenda (WPS), the Gender Issues Programme organized a high-level event with UN Women and the OSCE Troika on the topic of renewing commitments to the women, peace and security agenda in the OSCE region. The 12 October discussion focused on real experiences and good practices in implementing the WPS agenda and on practical proposals for future action, and panellists and participants identified a need for stronger commitments and greater efforts to include women at all stages of the conflict cycle.

## COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON GENDER EQUALITY

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone, but it has disproportionately affected women and girls and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. The Gender Issues Programme raised awareness of the impact of the pandemic on women and women's rights by organizing a series of webinars for OSCE staff and participating States. The first one was titled "Gender equality and security: opportunities and challenges for including the gender perspective in COVID-19 crisis responses". Another webinar organized in collaboration with the Albanian Chair-in-Office, called "Combating the pandemic within the COVID-19 pandemic: violence against women and girls", discussed the rise in domestic violence as a result of lockdown measures and provided concrete recommendations on the inclusion of gender-based violence prevention and response in post-recovery



-  Increase in calls to victim support hotlines reported in at least 26 participating States
-  Increase in online violence and harassment against women and girls
-  Decrease in access to support services for survivors

Source:  
mapping conducted by the OSCE Programme for Gender Issues in May 2020

action plans and on improving the access to services for survivors of gender-based violence.

The webinars shed light on the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's rights and well-being, and demonstrated that targeted action is needed to prevent a regression of hard-won progress on gender equality. They provided participating States with recommendations and good practices, as well as a list of resources, to improve their emergency response.

COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on the situation of women in conflict-affected areas, on women's civil society organizations working on peace and on the delivery of services to populations in affected areas. The Gender Issues Programme partnered with the Women's Regional Platform for Peace Dialogue (WRPPD) to organize a targeted online discussion on the consequences of COVID-19 consequences for women living in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The WRPPD is a forum for women peace and human rights activists from countries in Eastern Europe, the Baltic region, the South Caucasus and

Central Asia working on preventing conflict, protecting the human rights of women and girls and increasing human security. The 29 May discussion provided a platform for WRPPD members to inform OSCE ambassadors and other international stakeholders about the challenges that women in the region were facing because of COVID-19. It was important for women peacebuilders on the ground to share their experiences and concerns with the international community and to have their voices heard.

“The fact that the impact of measures on women’s security often were considered later or not at all shows the importance of the participation of women in crisis management at all stages.”

“During times of crisis, we have to be extra vigilant [to ensure] that the gains achieved on gender equality are not lost, as persistent inequality might actually worsen if not properly addressed from the onset.”

**Amarsanaa Darisuren**  
OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues



Raising awareness of the impact of the pandemic on women and women's rights was a focus area of the OSCE's Gender Issues Programme in 2020. (Pexels/Gustavo Fring)



Women, peace and security: OSCE SMM monitor Jennifer Langlais in her duty station Donetsk city, 27 February 2020. (OSCE)



## INSTITUTIONS

The OSCE includes three institutions dedicated to specialized areas of work: the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights promotes democratic development and human rights; the High Commissioner on National Minorities based in The Hague uses quiet diplomacy and early action to seek resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace and security; and the Vienna-based Representative on Freedom of the Media monitors media developments and provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom.

The Institutions have supported OSCE participating States in integrating human rights protection and the needs of all groups in society in their responses to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. (*Unsplash/Malu de Wit*)

# Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Director: **Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir** (until July 2020), **Matteo Mecacci** (appointed in December 2020)

Budget: €16,394,000 (Unified budget), €3,197,117 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 79 international, 67 local (including 17 working under extrabudgetary projects)

[www.osce.org/odihr](http://www.osce.org/odihr)

As the primary institution within the OSCE focusing on the human dimension of security, the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides support, assistance and expertise to governments and civil society in OSCE participating States to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination and respect for the rights of Roma and Sinti.

"2020 was a hard year for us all. At the same time, it brought home our shared humanity, and in this way it was an opportunity to face unprecedented challenges by strengthening our commitments to strong institutions, the rule of law, tolerance, respect for human rights and freedoms, and democratic elections. ODIHR continued to work towards this aim, without pause, while effectively adapting to the new situation."

**Matteo Mecacci**

Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Office undertook the necessary measures to provide adequate training, while also implementing sanitation and hygiene measures, to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission during its observation activities.

Over the year, the Office published some 50 election-related reports that comprehensively assessed electoral processes for consistency with OSCE commitments,



Voters fill out their ballots during the first round of Poland's presidential election. Warsaw, 28 June 2020. (OSCE/Katya Andrusz)

## ELECTIONS

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and related response measures put the conduct of elections at risk across the OSCE region. Following the initial wave of postponed or cancelled elections and the accompanying legal and practical challenges, elections took place throughout the rest of the year. ODIHR was the first intergovernmental organization to resume election observation activities during the pandemic, deploying observers to 16 elections in 15 participating States. The

## Election observation in 2020

Not starred denotes a full-scale election observation mission comprised of a core team of experts, long-term observers and short-term observers

- \* denotes limited election observation mission comprised of a core team of experts and long-term observers
- \*\* denotes either an election assessment mission or an election expert team comprised only of a core team of experts
- \*\*\* denotes election observation missions that had to be modified due to the coronavirus pandemic



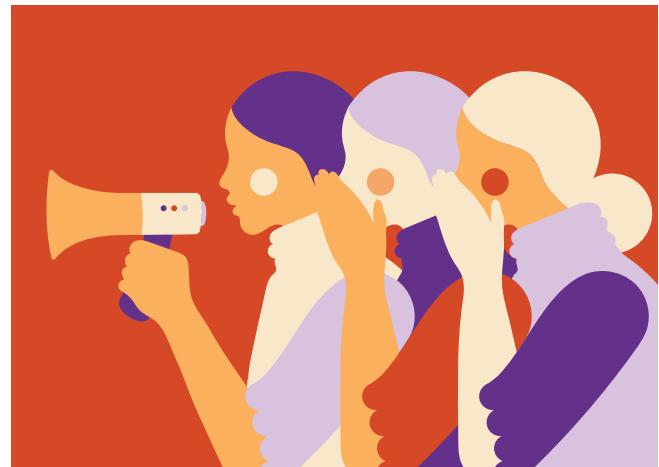
international obligations and other standards. Thirteen final reports provided recommendations to participating States on means of improving their election processes. In 2020, the Office supported eight participating States in their efforts to address ODIHR's electoral recommendations. This support took the form of technical expertise for Ukraine (provided during a country visit) and technical advice and reviews of proposed amendments to electoral legislation for Albania, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro and Poland.

### COVID-19 AND ALTERNATIVE VOTING METHODS

With most OSCE participating States predominantly using in-person voting with paper ballots in polling stations, countries holding elections during the COVID-19 pandemic have had to employ special measures, such as adjustments to the layout of polling premises, more stringent queue control and the use of personal protective equipment, disinfectants and personal or single-use pens. Beyond these measures, more profound modifications to voting methods and procedures, including a shift away from traditional paper-based voting in polling stations on election day, were widely discussed as possible alternatives. ODIHR contributed to this discussion through its paper on alternative voting methods and arrangements, which focuses on benefits, risks and practical considerations in light of international standards and good practice, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The future of democracies lies in the hands of women. With the support of OSCE/ODIHR's Gender Audit tool, our work to promote women's political participation is more effective than ever. Inclusive societies make better democracies, for the benefit of all."

**Annika Ojala**  
Communications and Feminist Policy Expert, Finnish Green Women's Association, Finland



(Cecilia Castelli)

parliament, as well as engaging members of parliament through its Disability Inclusion Checklist for Parliaments.

### DEMOCRATIZATION

To support OSCE participating States in protecting fundamental freedoms and ensuring that courts and parliaments continued to operate after emergency measures were introduced, ODIHR expanded its work on judicial independence and accountability, lawmaking and the functioning of democratic institutions.

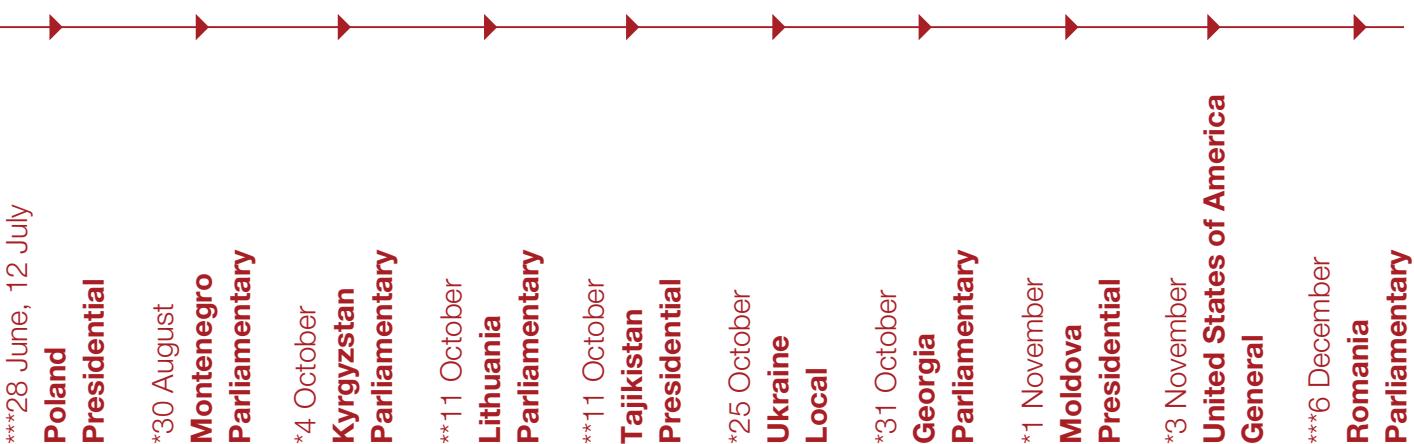
Following the onset of the pandemic, the Office supported a number of states in adapting parliamentary working practices and legislation, including through the use of new technologies, to strengthen parliamentary integrity. ODIHR stepped up its focus on the political participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in policy-making through the development of tools for participating States to assess their practices and legislation, to increase accessibility and to make institutions more inclusive. For example, ODIHR backed parliamentary inclusion efforts in both Ukraine and Uzbekistan, commissioning surveys of individuals with various types of disabilities about their access to

Another key aspect of ODIHR's democratization work in 2020 was the promotion of open and inclusive lawmaking in the difficult circumstances caused by the health emergency. The Office reviewed 22 pieces of draft legislation from 10 OSCE participating States – often at the request of OSCE field operations – on a range of issues, from the judiciary and political party regulation to freedoms of association, religion and belief, and assembly, all of which were in some way impacted by the pandemic.

Throughout the year, ODIHR also examined ways in which the pandemic affected freedom of movement, the human rights of those displaced by conflicts and the treatment of migrants. The Office helped share good practices and assisted states in developing policies that take a human rights-based approach.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

To meet the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, participating States adopted emergency measures, some of which resulted in questionable human rights restrictions.



ODIHR swiftly adjusted its work and stepped up its monitoring and assessment of emerging human rights concerns and its assistance for state institutions to address the emergency in line with human dimension commitments.

ODIHR provided tailored capacity-building support, policy advice and thematic analysis, and forged new and existing partnerships with international organizations, state institutions and civil society. This included the development of practical tools such as guidance on monitoring places of detention through the COVID-19 pandemic for oversight bodies of places of detention, in collaboration with the Association for the Prevention of Torture, and guidance on human rights and gender equality during public emergencies. ODIHR also supported national human rights institutions, producing a reference tool on their role in times of emergency and through training organized with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. Emerging trends in trafficking of human beings and their impact on victims and survivors were examined in a report produced with UN Women based on a global survey of survivors of trafficking and front-line stakeholders.

"The right to defend and the right to be defended were the foundation of the Copenhagen Document. We need to remember this, especially in today's environment, where I sometimes have the impression that being called a 'human rights defender' is a stigma rather than recognition of their crucial role in upholding OSCE commitments. That must be challenged."



**Gerald Staberock**

Secretary General of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

## TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The year 2020 brought home the relevance of ODIHR's work in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. ODIHR provided a platform for dialogue on ways in which states and civil society can root out the discrimination, intolerance and racism with which all societies continue to grapple and which increased in many places after the outbreak of the pandemic.

In May, the first ever Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting to be held online addressed the scapegoating of minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic, examining measures to prevent intolerant discourse – including cyberhate – from undermining the social fabric and escalating into conflict. This was followed in September by a webinar on the role of youth in countering racism and xenophobia in the OSCE region.

Victims remain at the centre of ODIHR's work to address hate crime. In 2020, the Office launched a two-year project on hate crime victim support. By utilizing online platforms, the project brought together experts from 41 project countries to exchange good practices, map available support structures and develop resources to ensure that hate crime victims' needs are met. This victim-centred approach was also reflected in the publication of two practical guides on hate crime victims in the criminal justice system and on the security needs of Muslim communities.

The Office also launched the second phase of its Words into Action project and, in co-operation with UNESCO,

published a set of four teaching curricula to address anti-Semitism in schools.

21%: increase in the number of hate incidents reported by civil society as part of ODIHR's 2019 Hate Crime Report (6,964 incidents in 2019 / 5,735 incidents in 2018).

39: the number of participating States that reported hate crime data and information to ODIHR for 2019.

## Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues

As in previous years, 2020 started with an ambitious work plan comprising activities on the ground, capacity-building and training, and numerous local and regional events. The Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues was quick to reassess its schedule and adjust it in order to continue supporting states in their efforts to increase Roma participation. The Nicolae Gheorghe Roma Leadership Academy was tailored to online delivery and was successfully organized for two groups of young Roma leaders. While recognizing that Roma communities face challenges accessing online tools, ODIHR is working to transform its training of trainers on police and Roma as well as for Roma human rights defenders into online instruments so they can continue to be provided in local communities. These will be hosted and delivered through an online training and education platform, allowing human rights work with Roma communities to continue until the pandemic subsides. Although 2020 brought with it a number of limitations and challenges, ODIHR's quick adaptation, new skills and competencies allowed it to continue to serve participating States in meeting their human dimension commitments.



Participants at the Roma Leadership Academy Nicolae Gheorghe. (Piotr Markowski)

"Roma and Sinti leadership, in times of new challenges, is needed more than ever. The acute struggle and necessity to act with urgency on human rights, alongside Roma communities, comes with the fundamental need to strengthen political leaders within our communities. Sharing experiences and knowledge with peers and mentors at ODIHR's 'Nicolae Gheorghe' academy has helped improve my expertise and leadership capabilities tremendously."



**Roxanna-Lorraine Witt**

participant in the Nicolae Gheorghe Roma Leadership Academy 2020

# High Commissioner on National Minorities

High Commissioner: Ambassador Lamberto Zannier (until July 2020);  
Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov (appointed in December 2020)  
Budget: €3,504,000 (Unified budget), €721,440 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 20 international, 12 local (including 5 under extrabudgetary projects)  
[www.osce.org/hcnm](http://www.osce.org/hcnm)

The position of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) was established in 1992 after interethnic hostilities swept through Eastern Europe. The High Commissioner's mandate is to prevent conflict in the OSCE region by providing early warning and taking early action at the first sign of tensions involving national minorities. Using quiet diplomacy and a long-term programmatic approach, the High Commissioner identifies and addresses the root causes of interethnic tensions and works closely with the 57 OSCE participating States, providing advice on inclusive policies for well-integrated multi-ethnic societies founded on dialogue, mutual understanding and respect for diversity.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MINORITIES

When the coronavirus pandemic took hold in early 2020, the High Commissioner acted swiftly, urging governments to develop COVID-19 responses that were inclusive and sensitive to minorities' needs. A formal HCNM statement provided six recommendations for the 57 participating States' initial COVID-19 responses, urging them to uphold human rights; to be inclusive; to be sensitive to language needs; to protect the economically vulnerable, especially minority women, who are often disproportionately affected; to maintain zero tolerance for discrimination and xenophobia; and to build on positive examples to promote social inclusion. An HCNM webinar called "The Impact of Covid-19 on Minorities: Emerging Lessons about Risks and Good Practices" and online video clips, or "explanimations", elaborated on this. Throughout 2020, the focus was on protecting the rights of national minorities and the safety and health of staff during the pandemic, while the High Commissioner continued his regular conflict prevention work with minimal disruption.

Working online rapidly became the norm, with online meetings resulting in closer relationships with distant partners. Inevitably, there were casualties too: the ceremony to present the award to the winner of the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award was postponed until autumn 2021, as the past and present winners are always physically present at the ceremony. A representative of the Pavée Point Traveller and Roma Centre, winner of the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award, will collect the award in person in 2021 for the Centre's pioneering work in Ireland to protect Roma and Travellers' rights.

"As governments rush to introduce emergency measures, it is also vital that they remember to include the needs of everyone in society, including persons belonging to national minorities and other marginalized communities."

Lamberto Zannier  
High Commissioner on National Minorities

## MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENTS

The High Commissioner continued supporting governments and minority groups through multi-year country and regional programmes, such as the Central Asian Education Programme with its popular winter and summer schools on multilingual education (MLE) for teachers from all over Central Asia. One important milestone was the conclusion of a five-year multilingual education pilot programme in Ukraine, culminating in the production of an MLE training manual, a high-level conference for policymakers and five MLE round tables, including one just before lockdown titled "The Formation of Multilingualism in Children and Pupils: Progressive European Ideas in the Ukrainian Context".

Inclusive societies with respect for diversity are the High Commissioner's aspirational benchmark. Success requires political will, a specific skill set and an awareness and understanding of minority issues. Therefore, the HCNM always welcomes requests from governments to train civil servants to manage and mainstream diversity in their work. In 2020, the HCNM finalized a training programme on diversity management for the government of Ukraine. A diversity management training manual was produced as part of this initiative, and seven in-house trainers were licensed to deliver the programme.

## THE UNIFYING ROLE OF LANGUAGE

COVID-19 exposed the vulnerability of those on the margins of society by revealing how critical it is to have access to information in one's own language during an emergency. The High Commissioner therefore continued to encourage states to provide basic services in the languages used by various communities, especially for healthcare and official COVID-19 communications.

Bridges can also be built between communities through basic language learning. The year 2020 saw digital launches of two pioneering language-learning products that facilitate communication across the language divide. The first is a day-to-day phrasebook in Albanian and

Macedonian. The second – an everyday speaking guide developed in Cyprus – offers basic phrases in Greek, Turkish and two associated Cypriot dialects. Both are the result of co-operation with two former Max van der Stoel Award winners: the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, based in Cyprus, and the Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje, based in North Macedonia.

## EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

While language has the power to unite and inform people, and multilingual education can help to achieve this, an inclusive, integrated society can be achieved only if everyone participates fully. Recognizing that members of minority groups are often absent from public life, the High Commissioner continued to engage with governments on this issue. In Uzbekistan, two round tables explored how national minorities could participate effectively in public, socio-economic, cultural and religious life. In Georgia, the “Multiparty Dialogue on National Minority Issues in Georgia” aimed to increase the participation of national minorities in public affairs with a series of round-table discussions in Tbilisi, four televised debate shows, seminars for minority youth and a study tour for minority youth to meet decision makers. In Moldova, the findings of a two-year HCNM study into the effective participation of national minorities in public life in Moldova was presented to the government, and in September a

High-Level Dialogue was co-organized by the HCNM to show the link between peace, stability, effective models of inclusive governance and autonomy issues. COVID-19 also prompted an OSCE-wide webinar called “The Economic Consequences of COVID-19 on National Minorities”, further highlighting the importance of helping national minorities participate fully in socio-economic life.

## THEMATIC FOCUS AND EVENTS

The HCNM’s thematic guidelines and recommendations encapsulate the advice of successive High Commissioners on nine themes affecting national minorities. Work on new thematic areas continued in 2020, including the participation of national minorities in socio-economic life and contested histories. The latter is timely, with domestic disputes about emblems, statues and historical representation flaring up in 2020 and featuring in the international media. In 2020, preparations got under way for the 25th anniversary of *The Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities* (1996) and the 15th anniversary of the *Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies* (2006). To prepare, online discussions were held on principles and good practices for policing in diverse societies, co-organized with the US Helsinki Commission, and a webinar called “The evolution and practice of multilingual education: From The Hague Recommendations to the digital era” was also held.



Results of a five-year pilot programme to promote multilingual education in four regions of Ukraine are shared with 60 participants at a round table event organized by the HCNM and the Education Ministry of Ukraine, 20 February 2020, Kyiv, Ukraine.  
(OSCE/Andrii Honchak)



One of four debate shows televised in Georgia to discuss how to involve members of minority groups in public life. (OSCE/Nino Gogoladze)

# Representative on Freedom of the Media

Representative: **Harlem Désir** (until July 2020),  
**Teresa Ribeiro** (appointed in December 2020)  
Budget: €1,608,800 (Unified budget), €257,623 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 17  
[www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media](http://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media)

**The Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) observes media developments in the participating States, advocates and promotes full compliance with the Organization's principles and commitments in respect of freedom of expression and free media, and responds to serious non-compliance therewith. 2020 was the year in which Freimut Duve, who created the Office and served as the first RFoM from 1998 to 2003, passed away.**

## THE PANDEMIC

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented and wide-ranging obstacles to freedom of expression, access to information and journalists' ability to carry out their work. From the imposition of states of emergency to the blocking of news websites and the adoption of legislation aimed at tackling the spread of disinformation related to the pandemic, participating States across the region placed stringent restrictions on access to information and journalists' work. Alongside this, journalists and media workers faced increasing violence, harassment and threats to their safety, from both the authorities and citizens, particularly during a large number of demonstrations. The economic sustainability of media outlets was also a victim of the pandemic, with countless media outlets forced to close or lay off workers.

The pandemic threatens media outlets, but also society's wider access to information and media plurality as a whole, especially minority journalism and marginalized voices. To counter these negative trends, the RFoM made many interventions on the impact of COVID-19 on media freedom, highlighting the importance of promoting and protecting access to, and the free flow of, information during the pandemic. In several cases, these efforts led to a change of intended regulations and policies that could have been detrimental to media freedom.



The Representative on Freedom of the Media intervened on the impact of COVID-19 on media freedom. (*Unsplash/Jakob Owens*)



Freimut Duve, First OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Vienna, 11 December 2003. (OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev)

## FREIMUT DUVE (1936-2020), FIRST OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

*"There is no freedom without media freedom. Stay strong and dedicated to this great idea!"* Freimut Duve, founder of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, spoke these words in 2017 on the occasion of the Office's 20th anniversary. It was his grand idea that led to the establishment of the RFoM, which he built from the ground up and made into a staunch advocate of freedom of expression. Duve, who passed away in March 2020, relentlessly promoted the importance of media freedom as a pillar of democracy and a cornerstone for building societies that enjoy civil rights and fundamental freedoms. He knew that journalists should be able to provide objective and reliable information so that citizens can make informed decisions and hold their elected representatives accountable for their actions.

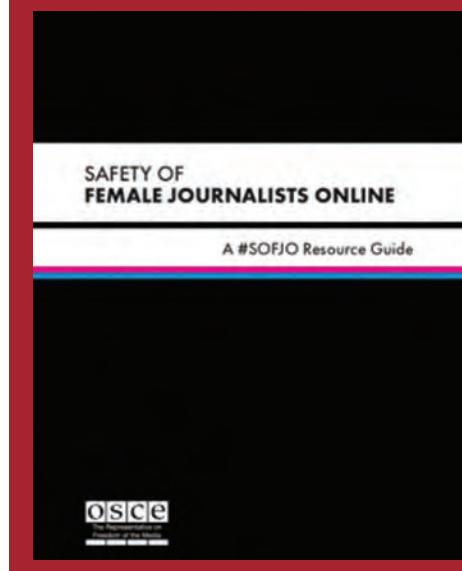
## COUNTRY VISITS AND CONFERENCES

In the few months before the first lockdown in March, the RFoM visited Ukraine to hold discussions with the authorities, the media community and international organizations, focusing particularly on two new draft laws. The Office later reviewed one of these draft laws as part of the three legal reviews that the Office published in 2020. In March, the Office organized its Second Central Asia Judicial Dialogue meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. During this meeting, judges from higher and appellate courts from all Central Asian countries, as well as international experts and judges from other OSCE participating States discussed legal measures against incitement to interethnic and religious enmity, as well as defamation and insult.

Because of COVID-19-related measures and restrictions, the Office conducted its work online from late March

onwards. The Office put a spotlight on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on freedom of expression, as part of its #SAIFE project. By organizing a round table in March, the Representative provided a platform to examine the challenges and contributions that machine-learning technologies, such as AI, can bring to freedom of expression and media freedom. These discussions were further developed through interviews with experts on the topic, which fed into the development of an AI Strategy Paper elaborating on the aforementioned challenges and exploring applicable international and regional standards on AI and human rights. The Paper's recommendations were discussed at a subsequent event in June that brought together a broad audience of 200 participants, including experts from participating States, civil society, academia, the tech industry and other relevant international stakeholders.

## SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS



The RFoM continued to address the specific threats and harassment faced by female journalists online. In the framework of its Safety of Female Journalists Online (#SOFJO) project, and to commemorate the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on 2 November, the Office launched its #SOFJO Resource Guide. Aimed at helping state and non-state actors across the OSCE region to take real action to improve the digital safety of female journalists, the Guide provides action proposals for ten key actors.

The safety of journalists remained a top priority for the Office of the RFoM. In November, the Office published the third edition of the *Safety of Journalists Guidebook*, which provides an overview of the safety situation facing journalists over the last three years. Alongside this, the Office published a special report with updated recommendations on the handling of the media during public assemblies. This report elaborates on the role of both law enforcement agencies and journalists during public events, and offers observations and recommendations to facilitate the media's ability to cover such events without undue hindrance.

## REGIONAL MEDIA CONFERENCES

The Office was also able to organize its annual regional media conferences in 2020, albeit in an online format. In September, in co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia and with the support of all OSCE field missions in the region, the Office held the seventh "South East Europe Media Conference", focusing on the overarching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on media freedom and journalists' ability to perform their professional activities. The event, which gathered upwards of 200 participants, also examined national mechanisms to ensure the safety of journalists and the efforts needed to tackle the specific challenges faced by female journalists online. In October, the 22nd "Central Asia Media Conference" took place with over 150 participants from the region. The event addressed such topics as the promotion

of diversity in mainstream media; ways of countering disinformation, hate speech and so-called harmful content; and the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. In November, the Office organized its 17th "South Caucasus Media Conference" with over 50 participants from the region, who discussed the promotion of freedom of information during health crises and the state of media freedom in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Lastly, in November, in the framework of the Cyprus Media Dialogue project, the Office concluded the second exchange opportunity between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot journalists, with the aim of encouraging co-operation between media outlets and journalists, and to advance accountable, quality journalism.



## FIELD OPERATIONS

In addition to its political bodies, Secretariat and institutions, the OSCE maintains a network of 15 field operations located in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

# Field operations in 2020

The OSCE's field operations assist host countries in putting their OSCE commitments into practice and fostering local capacities through specific projects that respond to their needs. Activities vary with the context of the individual field operation and host country and are governed by the mandate of each field operation. The field operations enable the OSCE to manage crises and to play a critical post-conflict role, helping restore trust among affected communities. Several field operations contribute to early warning and conflict prevention, and some also monitor and report on developments on the ground.

## THE OSCE HAD THE FOLLOWING FIELD OPERATIONS IN 2020:

### SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

- Presence in Albania
- Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Mission in Kosovo
- Mission to Montenegro
- Mission to Serbia
- Mission to Skopje

### EASTERN EUROPE

- Mission to Moldova
- Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
- Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
- Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk

### SOUTH CAUCASUS

- Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the Minsk Conference

### CENTRAL ASIA

- Centre in Ashgabat
- Programme Office in Bishkek
- Programme Office in Dushanbe
- Programme Office in Nur-Sultan
- Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan



# Presence in Albania

Head of Presence: Ambassador Bernd Borchardt (until August 2020),  
Ambassador Vincenzo Del Monaco (from November 2020)  
Budget: €2,981,200 (Unified budget), €610,876 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 17 international, 73 local  
[www.osce.org/presence-in-albania](http://www.osce.org/presence-in-albania)

The OSCE Presence in Albania continued to work with its Albanian partners in support of parliamentary work, border police and the prevention of environmental crime. In addition, the Presence provided assistance in response to some of the most urgent needs created by the coronavirus pandemic.

## ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF ALBANIA

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed under a state of emergency severely affected all areas of life in Albania, including the functionality of the Albanian Assembly. In order to help the Assembly move all its committee meetings online, the Presence adapted quickly and provided the needed technical resources to equip seven committees' meeting rooms with computer terminals to be used for online communication platforms. This support significantly improved the Assembly's capacities to conduct online committee meetings simultaneously, thereby improving the efficiency and organizational methods of parliamentary work and the efficiency of support services.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR ALBANIA'S BORDER POLICE

The Presence donated personal protective equipment against COVID-19 worth €20,000 to Albania's Border and Migration Police at the imminent opening of Albania's borders after the first wave of COVID-19, on 28 May 2020.

The personal protective equipment that the Presence donated to the Border Police included infrared thermometers, plastic face shields, carbon face masks, disinfectants and full-protection bodysuits. They were distributed to all border-crossing points in Albania, including ports and the international airport. The Presence

also visited Albania's main border-crossing points to assess the overall situation and measures taken in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The General Director of the Albanian State Police, Ardi Veliu, considered the donation very necessary: *"I thank the Presence for this donation and for the support and assistance that it has continuously given to the State Police and specifically to the Border Police. With the opening of borders, the Border Police will be faced with new challenges regarding physical distancing and contact with citizens; therefore, we need to be prepared and fully equipped,"* he said.

The Presence has a long history of co-operation with Albania's Border and Migration Police; they are currently working together to establish Hot Pursuit Protocols and police co-operation centres between Albania and its neighbouring countries. The Presence also offers capacity-building for better control of Albania's borders to prevent criminal activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, irregular migration and the movement of foreign terrorists fighters.

## 2020 OSCE CHARITY BALL DONATION FOR ROMA AND EGYPTIAN FAMILIES IN ALBANIA

Shortly after the Government of Albania's mid-March introduction of nationwide restrictive measures due to the COVID-19 outbreak, calls for urgent help from local Roma and Egyptian NGOs reached the Presence.



A ceremony to mark the donation of protective equipment against COVID-19 to Albania's Border and Migration Police, Tirana, 28 May 2020. (Albanian State Police/Oltion Milo)



Roma women receive a package of groceries and basic hygiene items, Vlora, 3 June 2020. (OSCE/Ejola Likaj)

While the Government took action to help vulnerable communities, the assistance was not sufficient to cover all their needs. The legislation offers families that are part of social welfare schemes access to emergency financial help and food packages. Unfortunately, many Roma and Egyptian families are not part of welfare schemes, mainly due to the fact that they are not able to follow up with registration procedures.

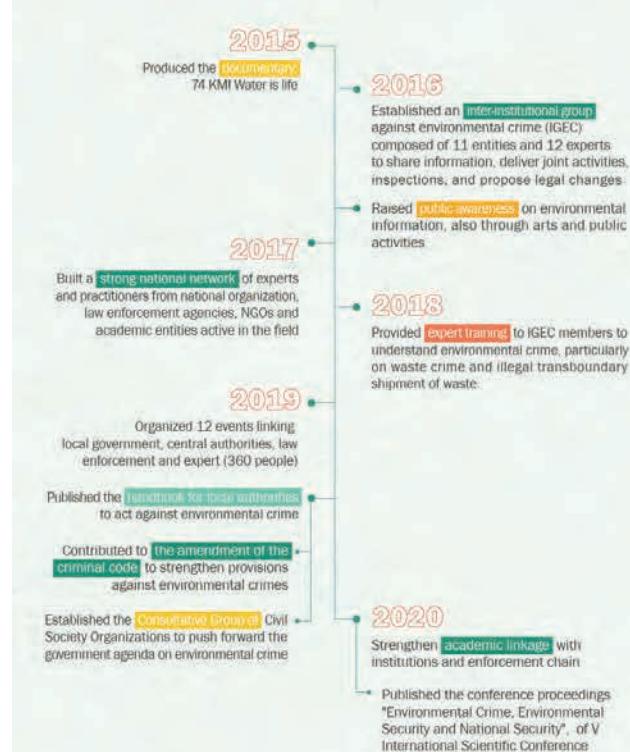
Accordingly, the Presence stepped in with funding from the OSCE Charity Ball in Vienna to address the needs of the Roma and Egyptian families, who are among the most vulnerable people in the country. The OSCE assistance was channelled through a reputable Roma NGO, which was already operating in the field and distributing humanitarian assistance. The Charity Ball Fund donation of €9,000 enabled the Presence to offer food packages to 450 families in eight cities across Albania during the first two weeks of June 2020. Thus, packages of groceries and basic hygiene items (soap, detergents) were distributed to vulnerable Roma and Egyptian families that had not benefitted from state emergency schemes. “It was a great help”, said a Roma beneficiary. “You provided food for my children for the next three weeks.” Through this intervention, the Presence showed its commitment to promoting and supporting the improvement of the living conditions of the most vulnerable communities in Albanian society.

### MITIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS

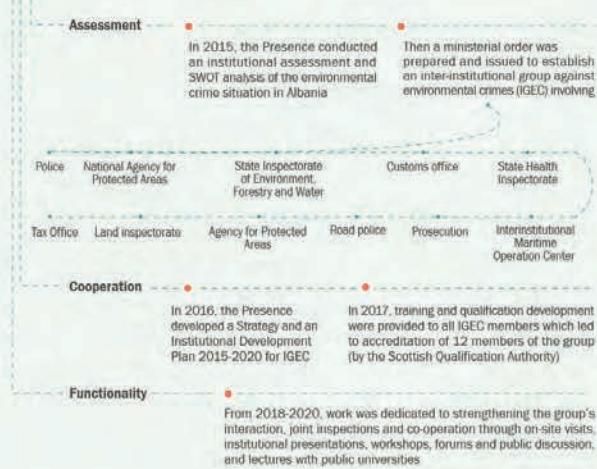
In 2020, state authorities reported an increase in environmental violations. This was mainly due to weakened environmental inspections, which came as a result of the environmental inspectorate's restructuring in 2019 that split it into five new agencies.

The Government called on the Presence to provide support by conducting an institutional assessment of key environmental enforcement agencies, which resulted in key recommendations for central state institutions to resolve various overlaps between agencies. Before the pandemic, the Presence worked with various central state institutions to organize a national scientific conference dedicated to environmental crime, environmental security and national security. The Presence produced an infographic and a short video highlighting its work in the field of environmental activities for the period 2015–2020.

An important achievement was the support provided to the Consultative Group (CG) composed of CSOs, media and youth, which acts as a bridge with environmental authorities to expose environmental violations. On this basis, the Group produced a database and a quarterly electronic newsletter describing cases of environmental violations, which were handed over to the respective state authorities.



### OSCE PRESENCE IN ALBANIA ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS TIMELINE



Learn more about OSCE Presence in Albania environmental crimes activities:

# Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Head of Mission: Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec

Budget: €11,682,000 (Unified budget), €838,835 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 34 international, 281 local

<http://www.osce.org/bih>

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) adjusted quickly to the pandemic, shifting activities online, providing direct support to partners and working with institutions at all levels to co-ordinate pandemic responses. Local elections took place across BiH in November and December: the Mission's support to free and fair elections helped ensure that elections ran smoothly – in the interest of every citizen. At the same time, the Mission continued working on achieving its long-term goals: helping to foster a stable, secure and democratic society.

## ADAPTING TO COVID-19

COVID-19 has presented numerous challenges in BiH: human rights concerns, increases in domestic violence, new opportunities for corruption, difficulties in securing personal protective equipment (PPE), and the closing of schools and the transfer to distance learning.

By moving its operations online, the Mission continued to make progress on its long-term priorities. Training programmes for institutions were maintained thanks to innovative ICT tools. Investing in BiH's future – for instance, by continuing the Mission's Environmental Legal Clinics for university students online, and helping education institutions adapt to virtual learning – remained at the core of the Mission's agenda.

The Mission adapted its approach to monitoring criminal justice proceedings by expanding efforts to include trials on emerging issues. Given the new corruption risks facing the country, the Mission initiated the development of anti-corruption action plans at all government levels. These plans represent a systemic response to pandemic-related corruption and strengthen the role of anti-corruption teams throughout the country. In addition, the Mission offered guidance to the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) and other justice sector actors as they adapted their work processes to the realities of the pandemic.

Recognizing the human rights-related concerns raised by emergency legislation introduced in response to COVID-19, the Mission monitored developments and worked with counterparts to ensure the continuation of democratic procedures and respect for human rights. By procuring e-voting systems and equipment to live-stream plenary sessions, the Mission helped enable BiH parliaments to continue sessions and empowered citizens to keep democracy in check.

As schools moved to distance learning, the Mission took the lead in co-ordinating donations to educational systems from the international community. This helped ensure that IT equipment and Internet connections were provided to disadvantaged families, empowering their children to learn remotely. In response to increased needs in vulnerable communities and BiH institutions, the Mission shifted some financial resources to the procurement of PPE

and other essentials, including the donation of food and hygiene products to 371 Roma families, and the provision of substantial quantities of PPE to the BiH education, judicial and security sectors.

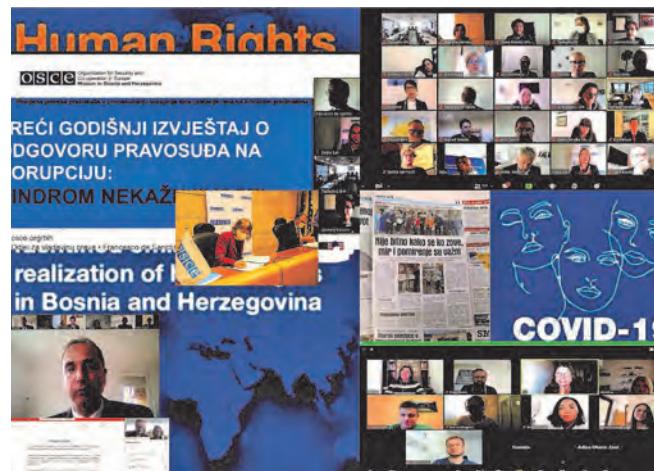
During this challenging year, the Mission kept its focus on the future, promoting reconciliation, security and economic growth. Continued support to the development of the

## SUPPORTING SAFE HOUSES

Recognizing the impact of lockdowns on domestic and gender-based violence, the Mission reached out to safe houses to determine what pressures they were facing:

*"People are confused, shocked and anxious ... Single mothers, ex-beneficiaries, are calling us to ask for food, medicines, disinfectants ... We are fighting, but we are also exhausted and scared." (Staff member of a safe house)*

To assist in keeping these crucial facilities operational, the Mission distributed food, hygiene products and PPE to eight safe houses across the country.



The OSCE Mission to BiH was quick to adjust to COVID-19 by providing direct support, bringing activities online and supporting the co-ordination of the pandemic response – all while working with partners at every level.  
(OSCE/Edib Jahic)

tourism sector in the Majevica and Upper Drina regions – for example, by fostering cross-entity co-operation, trust-building and youth empowerment. The Mission provided IT equipment to key security actors, ensuring the continuation of work tackling terrorism and organized crime, as well as the implementation of the BiH Strategy for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, thus helping keep BiH safe.

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE 2020 LOCAL ELECTIONS

The Mission's support to free and fair local elections was broad, placing emphasis on encouraging issue-based dialogue and supporting authorities in effectively addressing allegations of voter fraud and other irregularities to help rebuild public trust in elections.

The Mission facilitated the signing of election pledges in 26 locations, in which candidates for office committed to campaign responsibly, refrain from exerting pressure on voters and avoid inflammatory rhetoric. In addition, the Mission organized pre-election debates for mayoral candidates, offering an impartial platform through which citizens – especially those in isolated communities – could access policy-based information about the candidates in their area. These initiatives promoted constructive political dialogue based on policy issues, helping citizens make well-informed choices.

The Mission, in co-operation with ODIHR, continued to support the work of the BiH Central Election Commission (CEC) to ensure free and fair elections. By providing both political and technical support, the Mission assisted the CEC in overcoming political pressure, a long delay in



Head of Mission Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec and President of the BiH Central Election Commission Zeljko Bakalar during a visit to the main counting centre for local elections, Sarajevo, 20 November 2020. (OSCE/Ahmed Rifatbegovic)

receipt of its funding and the challenges of the pandemic, all of which called into question the functioning of the CEC. To ensure the prompt investigation of allegations of election fraud, the Mission facilitated information-sharing among the CEC, prosecutors and law enforcement. Also, the Mission provided financial support to the NGO coalition Pod Lupom to monitor the elections, thus strengthening the capacity of civil society to ensure voting was conducted in line with the highest international standards.

The Mission also worked to raise public awareness by supporting the production of videos on voting under COVID-19 restrictions and on combating election fraud. These helped inform citizens about how to vote safely and how to report potential fraud.

## BRČKO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY LAW: THE MISSION'S ROLE

The Mission remained focused on improving the protection of human rights in BiH. Following the Mission's assessment that legislation on freedom of peaceful assembly (FoPA) across BiH's 12 jurisdictions largely failed to meet international standards, the Mission and the Office of the High Representative presented the assessment to the Brčko District (BD) authorities, who saw an opportunity to embrace reform. The Mission collaborated with BD authorities in the drafting of a new law on FoPA, which was adopted on 29 July. The new legislation has been heralded as a best practice in the European context. The Mission looks forward to working with other jurisdictions in 2021 to facilitate the adoption of similar laws across BiH.



The OSCE Mission to BiH supported the election pledge signing ceremony in BiH. The pledge signatories agreed to uphold key democratic principles, Kiseljak, 14 October 2020. (OSCE/Anja-Lejla Hessarbanji)



Head of Mission Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec and Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko District Supervisor Michael Scanlan during a meeting with Brčko District officials regarding the district Law on Conflict of Interest and the adoption of other key legislation, Brčko, 1 October 2020. (OSCE/Svetlana Stanisavljevic)

# Mission in Kosovo

Head of Mission: Ambassador Jan Braathu

Budget: €17,462,600 (Unified budget), €267,244 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 117 international, 387 local

[www.osce.org/mission-in-kosovo](http://www.osce.org/mission-in-kosovo)

**The OSCE Mission continued to work closely with public institutions in promoting intercommunity dialogue and community rights, property rights and respect for cultural heritage; supporting police to enhance public safety and security; facilitating electoral reform processes; and fostering media and information literacy.**

## MISSION TRAINS TEACHERS TO MANAGE COVID-19 CONSEQUENCES

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic created one of the biggest challenges the education sector in Kosovo<sup>3</sup> has ever faced. The rapid closure of educational facilities and the urgent need to shift from classroom to online learning put an enormous strain on teachers and students.

*"Students of all ages, both young women and men, had their in-person contact discontinued and lost the physical presence of their peers. These challenges burdened young people and inevitably caused stress and possible mental and emotional health problems"*, said Ambassador Jan Braathu, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

According to research conducted by the University of Prishtina on the effects of COVID-19 in education, the pandemic has affected students' mental health. Notably, 65.4 per cent of students reported moderate stress levels, whereas 26.9 per cent reported high stress levels. Additionally, the Kosovo Association of Psychiatrists has stated that COVID-19 might have long-term negative effects on human psychology.

To help alleviate this situation, the Mission adapted its programmes to new circumstances and emerging needs. Working with a local NGO, a total of 800 teachers from all of Kosovo's municipalities and communities were trained on how to alleviate mental health issues among students as a consequence of school closures and isolation due to public health measures. Training sessions included basic knowledge about stress, stress management and strategies to prevent the consequences of stress after the pandemic. Upon completion of the training, teachers organized stress management activities for students in their schools.

## IMPROVING LANGUAGE COMPLIANCE

During the pandemic, the Mission continued its focus on community rights, including compliance with official language use. During the first weeks of the outbreak, government and municipal institutions struggled to provide information about the rapidly developing situation in all official languages. At their request, the Mission assisted them by providing technical resources to ensure outreach to all communities.

The Mission supported the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Health by providing translations of 160 pages of materials into non-majority community languages at the outset of the pandemic. In June, the Mission also translated the 150-page government manual for the prevention of COVID-19, which provides detailed instructions for the institutional, private and social sectors. The Mission also co-operated with an association for the blind to print the most relevant sections of the manual in Braille.

In post-conflict societies such as Kosovo, learning the language of "the other" is not always a preferred choice, and this has affected not only communication but also human relations. As a result, and also due to low demand, the availability of language courses in schools has been limited.

Against this backdrop, the Mission has – for many years now – offered Albanian and Serbian courses to many of its partners, including staff of local governments, clergy and more recently media and NGO personnel. Throughout 2020, 120 journalists, teachers, women and youth representatives



The OSCE Mission in Kosovo trained teachers to help their students cope with school closures and social isolation due to public health measures.  
([www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com))

3/ All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population in this Report should be understood in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

To help the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports protect, preserve and promote cultural heritage sites, the Mission produced a *Guidebook on Standards for Drafting Heritage Management Plans*, which outlines key concepts for developing state-of-the-art heritage management plans.



(OSCE/Ylka Fetahaj)

as well as staff from domestic violence shelters took intensive language courses organized by the Mission.

Thanks to this activity, participants from different communities working in various institutions were able to better communicate and offer services in both official languages. Due to COVID-19, the courses were held online, but this also brought together participants from

different municipalities who otherwise would not have met and gave them the opportunity to learn and discuss together.

## ASSISTANCE TO SHELTERS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As elsewhere, the pandemic exacerbated the risk of domestic abuse. One week before the lockdown began in mid-March, the Mission reached out to all domestic violence shelters to raise awareness of a potential increase in incidents of domestic violence and to encourage shelters to prepare. Data later provided by the Kosovo Police showed that in March 2020, the number of reported cases of domestic violence had tripled compared with March 2019. While the spike in cases tapered off, there was an overall increase of 12.9 per cent in domestic violence cases for the first eight months of the year.

To respond to the situation, the Mission launched a social media campaign to inform the general public about the services and support available to potential victims. In these outreach efforts, the Mission was supported by KFOR, the NATO-led peacekeeping force, which shared the information through its broadcast media channels.

The Mission's consistent, long-term advocacy efforts secured sustainable financing from municipalities for the domestic violence shelters in their regions. Between June and August, 14 of the 38 municipalities in Kosovo signed Mission-facilitated memoranda of understanding to fund the shelters for three years.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCREASE DURING COVID-19

March 2019      March 2020

36%

In March 2020, 36% more cases were reported to police Kosovo-wide compared to March 2019.

If you are a victim or aware of domestic violence occurring near you  
**call the Kosovo Police helpline 0800 19999 or 192.**

**osce** Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Mission in Kosovo



A launch poster for a social media campaign against domestic violence during COVID-19. The lockdown resulted in an increase in the number of domestic violence cases reported to police. (OSCE/Ylka Fetahaj)

# Mission to Montenegro

Head of Mission: Ambassador Maryse Daviet

Budget: €2,152,100 (Unified budget), €2,268 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 9 international, 23 local

[www.osce.org/mission-to-montenegro](http://www.osce.org/mission-to-montenegro)

The Mission supported Montenegrin institutions through effective and results-oriented programmes: from supporting electoral reform, strengthening democratic institutions and promoting gender equality, to building a free, resilient and professional media landscape, fostering security co-operation and governance and supporting regional youth reconciliation and exchanges through cooperation with the local branch office of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO).

## SUPPORTING LOCAL PUBLIC BROADCASTERS

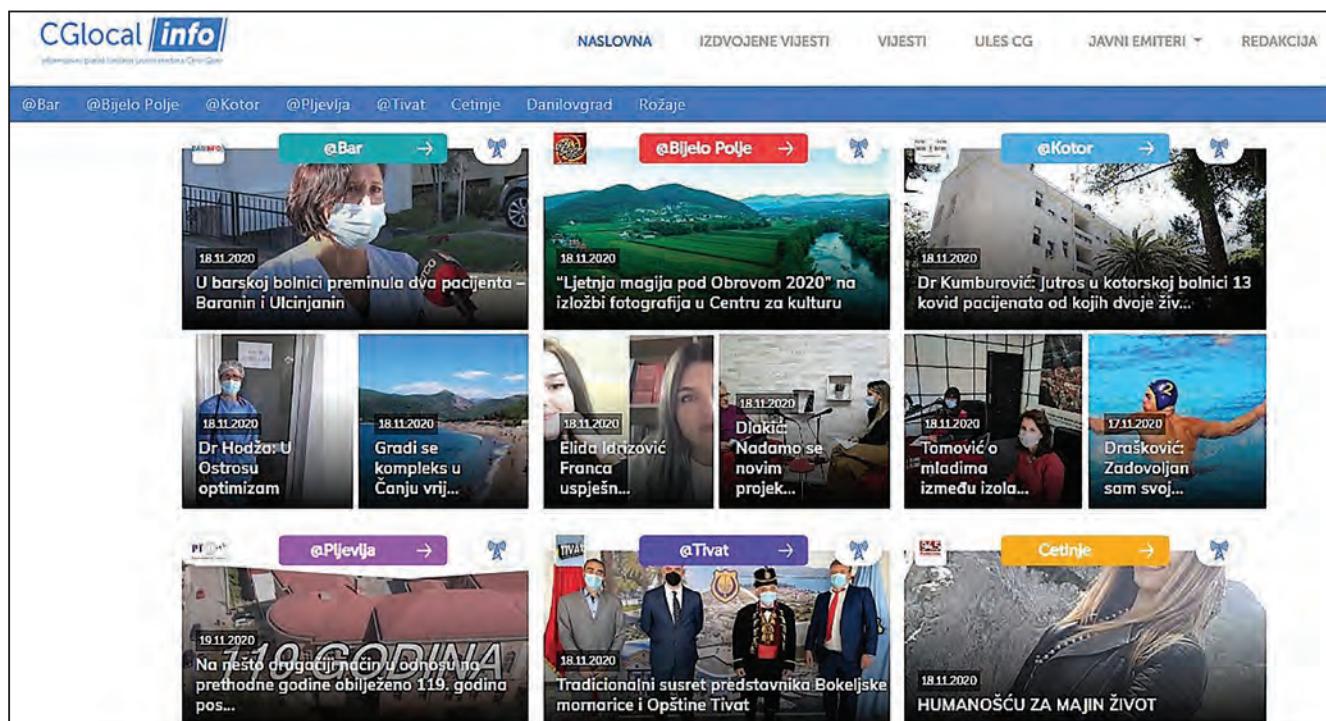
When COVID-19 reached Montenegro in March, schools, cafes and shops closed. Working from home became the norm, and travel between municipalities in Montenegro was restricted. For the Mission staff working from home, the challenge was to find ways to support local partners.

The lockdown brought into focus the importance of reliable local information. The Mission, in consulting its partner, the Union of Local Public Service Broadcasters (ULES), realized that the ULES's 12 member stations play a vital role in providing local information in their communities. Together with the ULES, the Mission developed a plan for these stations to make better use of the Internet and to bring their valuable information together in one platform. The Mission supported the local broadcasters in developing a centralized website (<https://cglocalinfo.me>) and an application that is

"In a time of unverified news, sensationalism, populism and superficiality, citizens need someone they can trust. Local public broadcasters are indispensable when it comes to objectively informing local communities and that they enjoy the trust of citizens. I am grateful to the OSCE for recognizing the importance of this webpage because for both the ULES and the OSCE, the citizen comes first."

**Dragan Popadić**  
Vice President of the ULES and Director of Radio Tivat

easily accessible on mobile phones. By building on previous training for local journalists on the use of online and social media, these stations are now better equipped to reach out to young people in their communities. This online platform will help citizens to rediscover their communities and to engage in local dialogue. Together with the ULES, the



A screenshot of the website of the Union of Local Public Service Broadcasters, [www.cglocalinfo.me](http://www.cglocalinfo.me) (developed with the support of the Mission), which provides citizens with local news from Montenegrin municipalities.

"The strategy needs to measure gender equality and demonstrate the benefits of equality to society."

**Ana Šćepanović**  
Centre for Women's Rights

"We need to address root causes of gender inequalities in our society. It is not possible to improve women's rights and keep patriarchal norms."

**Jovan Ulicević**  
Spektra

Mission produced an informational video about the platform and application.

### A NEW GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

In 2020, the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights sought the support of the Mission in drafting a new strategy for gender equality. As a result of the pandemic, the Mission and Ministry had to develop new processes to engage 46 stakeholders while respecting health measures, to identify lessons learned from the current National Action Plan for Gender Equality and to make recommendations for a new action plan. A questionnaire was developed and distributed online by the Ministry. This online approach had an unexpected added benefit, as stakeholders disseminated the questionnaire further through their email lists, thereby expanding the range of the consultation. The public also participated in the process via the Ministry's website. The Mission supported this process by facilitating a survey on the state of gender equality in Montenegro through Zoom focus groups. The survey found structural barriers to women's equal engagement in economic, social and political activities. With the expanded virtual consultation process, the Ministry developed a draft document and articulated its vision for Montenegro as a "society in which all women and men have equal opportunities to contribute to cultural, political and social progress and to enjoy equally all the benefits of the progress of society".

### COUNTERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a 27 per cent increase in reported cases of domestic violence in Montenegro. Acting on this empirical evidence, after consulting with relevant stakeholders, the Mission developed a project to support NGOs' response to

domestic violence and to support the Ombudsperson in preparing an analysis of cases of domestic and gender-based violence. The Mission also provided IT equipment to a women's rights NGO, furniture to a women's shelter and sewing machines, manicure/pedicure sets and toners for textile printing for women developing new start-up businesses. The Mission is also in the process of procuring a prefabricated house to accommodate women with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence.

### ENGAGING YOUTH TO PREVENT AND COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION THAT LEADS TO TERRORISM

The pandemic did not stop the Mission in implementing its cross-programmatic approach to support Montenegrin institutions to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism (P/CVERLT). The Mission, working in tandem with the National Co-ordinator for Combating Violent Extremism in Montenegro, recognized that, while young people are the most vulnerable to violent extremism, they also have the greatest potential to combat it by promoting peacebuilding, tolerance and intercultural learning. A workshop for first responders enabled participants to conduct risk assessments and strengthened their capacity to recognize, suppress and combat violent extremism among young people. As part of the Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism (LIVE) programme, the Mission trained young people to undertake local P/CVERLT initiatives. The Mission also gathered young people to discuss youth engagement in P/CVERLT. *"The workshop changed how I view the world. Now I am more encouraged and motivated to contribute to combating [violent extremism and radicalization] and to maintaining peace. Also now, when extremism, radicalism and even terrorism are mentioned, I know what it is and how it works, and I have helped a few people to understand it as well,"* noted a 16-year-old participant from Berane.

"The LIVE programme helped me understand that democracy and stability in Montenegro depends on young people perceiving pluralism as a resource rather than as a liability, and dialogue as the founding pillar of an inclusive and VERLT-resilient society."

Youth leader and participant in the LIVE programme



The Mission delivers food and hygiene packages to the Red Cross of Montenegro during the first COVID-19 lockdown, Podgorica, 16 April 2020. (OSCE/Goran Ojdanić)



Youth leaders explore cross-cultural intersections at a workshop organized by the local branch office of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO) with the Mission's support, Kolašin, 29 October 2020. (RYCO)

# Mission to Serbia

Head of Mission: Ambassador Andrea Orizio (until September 2020), Ambassador Jan Braathu (appointed in December 2020)  
Budget: €6,258,600 (Unified budget), €744,572 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)  
Staff: 22 international, 102 local  
[www.osce.org/mission-to-serbia](http://www.osce.org/mission-to-serbia)

The Mission worked in partnership with the host country's institutions, media and civil society to foster an inclusive, rule-based democratic system accountable to its citizens. It assisted in strengthening the rule of law and separation of powers; fighting organized crime and corruption; reforming the security sector; promoting human rights, good governance, the integration of national minorities, gender equality and regional connectivity; and fostering media freedom, ethics and professionalism. The Mission followed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rights of all citizens and tailored its programming to help protect the most vulnerable ones. Adapting its working methods, the Mission switched to online capacity-building and commissioned 20 publications and more than 15 types of multimedia material in the areas of criminal justice, anti-corruption, good governance, national minority rights, gender equality, civic education, media regulation and environmental protection.

## PARTICIPANTS BENEFITTING FROM MISSION-SUPPORTED TRAINING (ON-AND OFFLINE) IN 2020

Data source: OSCE Mission to Serbia



Students & Youth  
1028 total



- Media and digital literacy (310)
- Preventing hate crime and discrimination (200)
- Educational support to children from informal settlements (200)
- Legal learning and learning local government in southwest Serbia (169)
- Environmental Law Clinic (100)
- Democracy Academy (49)



Police  
303 total



- Investigating corruption, financial fraud and economic crime (138)
- Personal data protection (78)
- Youth safety (52)
- Police accountability (13)
- Preventing violent extremism (12)
- Cybercrime (10)



Civil Servants  
888 total



- General administrative procedure (538)
- Inspection oversight (314)
- Official use of national minorities languages (36)



Judges  
126 total



- Writing criminal judgments (60)
- Implementing environmental legislation (55)
- Victim and witness support (11)



Elected Officials  
325 total



- Induction training for new local councillors (295)
- Induction training for new MPs (30)



Prosecutors  
95 total



- Exploitation of COVID-19 pandemic by organized crime groups (50)
- Crime scene investigation (30)
- Victim and witness support (15)



Media  
305 total



- Safety of journalists (150)
- Professional reporting in pre-electoral period (85)
- Reporting in minority languages (70)



Women Advocates  
92 total



- Role of women in trade unions (46)
- Dialogue Academy for Young Women from Belgrade and Pristina (26)
- Women mentoring programme "Share your knowledge" (20)

## ASSISTANCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Mission monitored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related two-month state of emergency on the fundamental rights of all citizens. It encouraged parliamentary scrutiny of the adopted measures,

advocated for freedom and professionalism of the media during the crisis, organized round tables on the role of the judiciary during the pandemic and enabled online communication between citizens and the ombudspersons. The Mission also analysed Serbia's COVID-19 response from a gender perspective, advocated for the protection



To help the most vulnerable pupils unable to take part in distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mission partnered with the CSO Centre for Youth Integration to provide educational support to 200 Roma children living in informal settlements, Belgrade, 26 October 2020. (OSCE/Milan Obradović).



Within its wider efforts to strengthen judicial independence and separation of powers, the Mission supported the monitoring of the elections to the High Judicial Council and the State Prosecutorial Council, Belgrade, 12 November 2020. (OSCE/Milan Obradović).

of victims of domestic violence during the lockdown and helped the shelter for victims of trafficking in human beings maintain its 24/7 hotline and its Victim Support Unit. To mitigate the effects of distance learning on national minority communities, the Mission worked with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development on recording video classes of “Serbian as non-mother tongue”, and facilitated educational support to Roma pupils from informal settlements. In partnership with civil society, the Mission supported the provision of psychosocial support to persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Mission assisted relevant institutions and several health centres in COVID-19 hotspots, including those servicing migrant reception centres. Finally, to support the continued and effective operation of key partner institutions, the Mission procured personal protective equipment and similar supplies to ensure safe in-person operations on the part of critical services, as well as equipment and software licenses to facilitate their online work.

## 2020 ELECTIONS – BUILDING CAPACITIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

The 2020 parliamentary elections resulted in a record number of first-time members of parliament (MPs) – 140. Teaming up with several other organizations, the Mission launched a three-week induction course for the new MPs that covers the legislative, oversight and representative functions of the Parliament; the legislative process; MP's ethics and accountability; cross-party initiatives; and outreach to constituencies and youth. The 2020 elections also took place at the provincial and local level. The Mission partnered with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in launching a seven-week e-course that equipped 295 newly elected local councillors with knowledge of good governance principles at the local level: the system of local self-governance, the role of local assemblies, ethics and accountability for councillors, public participation, gender equality and emergency management.

## ASSISTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICIES



## MEDIA STRATEGY ADOPTION

On 30 January 2020, the Government adopted a new Media Strategy – a key tool for a pluralistic media environment – developed in an inclusive process facilitated by the Mission at the request of Prime Minister Ana Brnabić. The EU Delegation to Serbia, the Royal Norwegian Embassy to Serbia, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation also supported this process. The Strategy is a comprehensive document developed jointly by media and government stakeholders that aims to improve the public information system through a harmonized legal framework to foster freedom of expression; media freedom, professionalism, pluralism and literacy; the safety of journalists; a sustainable media market; and consistent implementation of legislation. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the same diverse working group continued working on the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy, adopted in December 2020.

# Mission to Skopje

Head of Mission: Ambassador Clemens Koja

Budget: €6,506,100 (Unified budget), €531,623 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 38 international, 116 local

<http://www.osce.org/skopje>

In 2020, the OSCE Mission to Skopje continued to support reforms pertinent to judicial independence, media freedom, community rights, democratization and police professionalization, while also working to strengthen Parliament and improve electoral processes. The Mission focused on assisting further implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and followed security-related developments in the country based on an early-warning methodology.

## STRESS REDUCTION FOR POLICE AND PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICERS

COVID-19 created unprecedented challenges for law enforcement agencies and private security companies as they worked to protect the population during the pandemic. While carrying out their essential work securing public order during the crisis, police officers were in constant contact with citizens, potentially exposing them to a new layer of danger in their already dangerous work. To help police officers address the adverse effects of job-related stress under these difficult conditions, the Mission supported training on stress management for 89 police officers (62 per cent women and 38 per cent men). The Mission also provided six similar courses for 150 private security staff (31 per cent women and 69 per cent men) from companies that are members of the Chamber of Private Security Companies of North Macedonia, which protect critical infrastructure, including hospitals, state institutions and municipal buildings.

## A SOCIETY FREE OF RUMOURS: OSCE-SUPPORTED CAMPAIGN SPEAKS UP AGAINST RUMOURS

In 2020, the Mission continued its Anti-Rumour Campaign to raise awareness of the detrimental effects of gender-

“Stress management training is extremely valuable for police officers, as our line of work is extremely specific and sensitive: we are exposed not only to acute stress but also to situations that are very risky. Although stress relief was not an unknown subject to me, the trainers provided us with a significantly deeper understanding of the subject and practical exercises to cope with stress that motivated me to search online for additional techniques on mental health improvement. When dealing with stressful situations, I go back to what I have learned and apply the practices that help me cope with stress. I believe that it would be very useful for this type of course to become a part of the regular training programmes for police forces.”

Natasha Srezoska

Crime Police Department, Public Security Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia

based discrimination. Through a novel online campaign, the Mission reached out to over a million people, while 14 real-world events delivered in full compliance with local COVID-related protocols engaged more than 16,000 participants of all ages across the entire country.

The campaign aims to debunk rumours that strengthen negative stereotypes and prejudice towards women and to raise awareness of the detrimental effects of gender-based discrimination and deeply rooted stereotypes, while building counter-narratives and greater community engagement.

To reflect the diversity of women and girls, the campaign focused on six subgroups simultaneously both affected by prejudice based on gender and based on ethnicity, disabilities, religion and belief, age, residency/social status and refugee/migrant status. The Mission's online interventions included photos with associated quotes, video testimonials, cartoons and illustrations, photo stories, banners of rumours versus counter-narratives, art exhibitions, theatre plays, competitions in schools and a dedicated Facebook fan page called “Loud against Rumours”. The campaign was presented with the OSCE Gender Equality Champion award in March 2021.



A police officer performing random checks of vehicles during the lockdown in response to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Skopje, 15 June 2020  
(Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia)

## MISSION'S COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND REACHES OUT TO PEOPLE IN NEED

In May 2020, the Mission launched its COVID-19 Response Fund through an exceptional call for proposals from local CSOs, citizens' associations and charities for implementing partnerships to address the needs of the most vulnerable and underserved communities in the country during the pandemic. The Fund was open to proposals for work supporting Mission priorities in areas including work with youth; people at risk, including the elderly; people with disabilities, including those with long-term physical and mental health conditions; smaller communities, including Roma and Sinti; survivors of domestic violence, gender-based violence and human

trafficking; and refugees and migrants. The Fund also accepted proposals focused on human rights protection and advocacy. Proposals from 11 CSOs were chosen and implemented at a cost of €153,346.

"We strongly support the OSCE Mission to Skopje's COVID-19 Response Fund, which we believe will help local non-governmental organizations to continue to support those most in need and most vulnerable, and strengthen democratic values in our society."

**Nikola Dimitrov**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

### ACTIVITIES FUNDED THROUGH THE COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

\*Numbers are limited to direct reach of beneficiaries and activities.

ORGANIZATION	BENEFICIARY REACH AND ACTIVITIES*		
	 Survivors of violence	 Counselling and legal advice	 Humanitarian assistance and provision of equipment
National Network to End Violence against Women and Domestic Violence	153 women 57 children	125 humanitarian packages	
The Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency			2 educational activities 146 school staff
The Healthy Options Project Skopje	46 families	45 humanitarian packages	13 outreach activities
The Sumnal Association for Development of the Roma Community	105 families	210 tablets and sim-cards for homeschooling	5 outreach activities 100 families trained in online learning
The Association of Special Educators and Rehabilitators (ASER)			E-platform for children with disabilities 100 registered users
Lastovica Association			E-learning centre for children and young adults with disabilities 100 registered users
The Youth Alliance Krushevo		3 cameras 1 live streaming switcher	Digital Youth Hub "M zone" 111 participants 11,000 reached through social media
Association for Media Literacy Planet-M			Annual Youth Film Festival via youth.mk 108 hours of film 181 festival participants 8 creativity workshops
Association for Research, Communications and Development PUBLIC			Online and audio versions of the magazine "Face to Face" 22 sessions on magazine selling techniques 300 registered users 20 visits per day
Association for Democratic Initiatives	Training of first responders on health needs for persons with disabilities and people in small rural communities	3,100 protective masks 590 disinfectant gels	8 outreach events 10,000 health flyers in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish
Association for Research, Analysis and Development Zelena Lupa		3,500 protective masks 1,000 pairs of gloves 50 visor masks 30 protective suits	3,000 flyers on protection against COVID-19

# Mission to Moldova

Head of Mission: Claus Neukirch

Budget: €2,302,700 (Unified budget), €835,106 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 13 international, 40 local

<https://www.osce.org/mission-to-moldova>

In 2020, the OSCE Mission to Moldova maintained an active mediating role to facilitate the Transnistrian settlement process amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## OVERCOMING PANDEMIC CHALLENGES IN MEDIATING THE TRANSDNIESTRIAN SETTLEMENT PROCESS

In close co-ordination with the Special Representative of the Albanian OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, the co-mediators and the observers, the Mission concentrated its efforts on maintaining dialogue between the Sides and facilitating practical solutions to the issues affecting the lives of people on both sides of the Dniester/Nistru River. The Mission's focus in this regard was to achieve further progress in the implementation of the "Berlin-plus" package and to address, through mediation and on-site monitoring, challenges stemming from measures taken in the context of the pandemic, such as the deployment of additional posts in the Security Zone and the restrictions on freedom of movement introduced by the Transnistrian side.

These challenging times demonstrated that achieving a sustainable Transnistrian settlement requires not only building new bridges between the two Sides but, most importantly, upholding the strong interconnectivity between the two banks of the Dniester/Nistru River – in particular the freedom of movement for ordinary people and businesses. Against this backdrop, the Mission enhanced its monitoring activities and conducted over 170 visits to the Security Zone from March 2020 until the end of the year to monitor freedom of movement for people living on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River. The Mission teams put special effort into monitoring the access of Moldovan farmers to their lands on the left bank and the crossing of the internal boundary line by pupils from Moldova-administered Latin-script schools to realize their right to an education – two confidence-building measures from the Berlin-plus package. Other activities aimed to facilitate solutions to maintain and improve interconnectivity between both banks in areas such as telecommunications, the use of banking services and commuting.

The Mission remained heavily engaged in the settlement process on the ground through the shuttle diplomacy conducted by the Head of the Mission and by bringing technology to the mediation table. Over the past year, the Mission facilitated 14 online and

## MANDATE FACILITATION

The OSCE Mission to Moldova facilitates a comprehensive and lasting political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in all its aspects, consolidating the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for Transnistria that fully guarantees the human, political, economic and social rights of its population.



An OSCE Mission team monitors the situation in the Security Zone, November 2020. (OSCE/Igor Schimbator)

13 offline meetings of experts from working groups, as well as between the two Chief Negotiators, and supported the Sides in developing and coordinating the effect of joint crisis response measures.

By continuing dialogue amid the pandemic, the Sides followed a results-oriented approach and managed to consolidate some of the confidence-building gains achieved in previous years. The five agreements from the "Berlin-plus" package of confidence-building measures continued to be implemented, while a mechanism for the participation of vehicles from Transnistria in international road traffic was extended in September 2020 for another two years.

Despite some disagreements, the Sides remained committed to a pragmatic approach to the negotiations, which will serve as a basis for advancing the settlement process in the next year and in mitigating the consequences of the pandemic on the lives of the people on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru.



An OSCE Mission team monitors the freedom of movement of pupils from Moldova-administered Latin-script schools on 1 September 2020. (OSCE/Igor Schimbator)

### FACILITATING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR PUPILS AND TEACHERS FROM LATIN-SCRIPT SCHOOLS

Since the beginning of the pandemic, teachers from Moldova-administered Latin-script schools have crossed the internal boundary line in the Security Zone with their school buses once per month. They come to the right bank to withdraw their salaries from cash machines. Every month the OSCE Mission teams monitor each crossing of the checkpoints by the schools buses.

Monitoring of the freedom of movement in the Security Zone became one of the Mission's top priorities in 2020. Pandemic-related travel restrictions imposed by the Transnistrian side limited access on the part of ordinary people to some basic services, which were otherwise available only on the right bank. In this regard, co-ordination of activities and mutually agreeable solutions between the two Sides was the cornerstone of the Mission's mediation efforts.

Likewise, the Mission's mediation efforts included facilitation of the freedom of movement for the over 1,500 pupils from Latin-script schools ahead of the new academic year. Located in Transnistria, these schools teach in the Latin script and use the school curriculum of the Republic of Moldova. Just over 240 pupils need to cross checkpoints in order to access their schools. Starting from 1 September, the Mission teams closely monitored the situation near the checkpoints and school premises, observing that pupils could cross the internal boundary line and start their school year without hindrance.

The good-faith co-operation between the Sides and the Mission's continuous monitoring of the Security Zone enabled the schools to resume their activities as planned.

Freedom of movement for pupils and teachers is one of the principles the Sides agreed on in the confidence-building measure on the functioning of the Latin-script schools, signed in 2017 as part of the settlement process.



A monitoring team of the OSCE Mission oversees departure of a ferry connecting the villages of Molovata Noua and Cocieri on the left bank of the Dniester/Nistru with the right-bank Moldova. The ferry played an important role in ensuring freedom of movement for people and goods during the pandemic. (OSCE/Igor Schimbator)



A monitoring team of the OSCE Mission speaks to farmers in the Dubasari district. The farmers have regained access to their farmlands since August 2018 thanks to confidence-building measures agreed by Chisinau and Tiraspol in 2017. (OSCE/Igor Schimbator)

# Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Chief Monitor: Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik

**Budget:** €108,9 million for the mandate period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (€91,5 million from assessed contributions and €17,4 million from extrabudgetary contributions). Total expenditure as of 31 December 2020 is €73,6 million, including €6,8 million extrabudgetary actual expenditure.

**Staff:** 1,296 (844 international, 452 national), including 543 monitoring officers as of 31 December 2020

<https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine>

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine is an unarmed civilian mission that was deployed in March 2014. Operating 24/7, the Mission's main effort and impact is in the field: it employs over 1,017 staff in ten monitoring teams throughout the country and 279 staff in the Head Office in Kyiv. The SMM's mandate includes establishing facts, gathering information and reporting on the security situation throughout Ukraine with the aim of contributing to reduce tension and fostering peace, stability and security. The SMM also monitors and supports respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of national minorities, and it facilitates dialogue on the ground.

## MONITORING IN EASTERN UKRAINE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Throughout the year, the SMM continued to implement its mandate while taking all necessary COVID-19 mitigation measures to minimize risk to the safety and security of its staff and of the communities in which they work.

As has been the case with all monitoring teams across Ukraine, the SMM continued patrolling and monitoring in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions – with a temporarily reduced footprint and prioritized tasks due to strict COVID-19 mitigation measures – to fulfil the broad spectrum of the SMM's mandated activities, and notably to help support the TCG 22 July 2020 agreement on measures to strengthen the ceasefire.

The SMM continued to use remote observation technology, including cameras, unmanned aerial vehicles and acoustic sensors.

In 2020, the Mission recorded 134,783 ceasefire violations, compared with 299,633 in 2019. The 55 per cent reduction is attributable to the 22 July agreement, which entered into force on 27 July. The ceasefire is now the longest-lasting and most successful since the beginning of the conflict in 2014.

The Chief Monitor continued to participate in online TCG meetings in his capacity as Co-ordinator of the Working Group on Security Issues (WGSI). The ceasefire, new disengagement areas and mine action as indicated in the negotiations of the Normandy Four format were the WGSI's main agenda items.

Despite the improvements cited above, in 2020 the security environment in eastern Ukraine remained challenging. The Mission maintained continuous and robust risk management by carefully assessing each operational activity, while holding regular security briefs and issuing advisories to its staff.

## MONITORING OF CIVILIAN LIVES ALONG THE CONTACT LINE

The SMM also continued to monitor the impact of the conflict on civilians, whose lives were additionally affected by measures implemented on both sides of the contact line in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Amid the pandemic, all five entry–exit checkpoints (EECPs) and the corresponding checkpoints of armed formations, through which thousands of civilians would ordinarily cross the contact line every day, were closed between the end of March and the beginning of July. During this period, civilians found themselves stranded at times on one side of the contact line or the other; only a few were allowed to cross for humanitarian reasons.

Since July, civilians have only been able to cross the contact line at two locations: at the EECP near Stanytsia Luhanska and its corresponding checkpoint south of the Stanytsia Luhanska bridge in the Luhansk region, and at the EECP near Novotroitske and its corresponding checkpoint near Olenivka in the Donetsk region, with the latter operating only twice a week. As a result, the number of civilian crossings registered at all EECPs dropped by 92 per cent in the period from March to November 2020 compared with the same period of 2019. Also, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mission has received about 1,280 requests from civilians seeking support to cross the contact line for a variety of reasons, mostly to return home, to visit sick relatives or to access urgently needed medical services. The Mission has referred these requests to relevant international organizations such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the ICRC and the TCG's Working Group on Humanitarian Issues for further action.

Following the support of the Normandy Four leaders to the efforts within the TCG to reaching an agreement on opening new crossing points along the line of contact,

based primarily on humanitarian criteria, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the TCG released a press statement, after a TCG meeting on 22 July 2020, noting that the sides had reconfirmed their readiness to open the Shchastia and Zolote crossing points in the Luhansk region simultaneously, no later than 10 November. On 10 November, the SMM observed that the Shchastia and Zolote entry-exit checkpoints were open to civilians; however, the corresponding checkpoints of the armed formations remained closed.

The conflict continued to take its toll on the civilian population. In 2020, the Mission corroborated 128 civilian casualties, including 17 children and 23 fatalities. Three civilian casualties due to shelling were confirmed following the measures to strengthen the ceasefire that entered into force on 27 July. Twenty-seven civilians, mostly men, were killed or injured by mines and other explosive devices, highlighting the fact that even if the number of ceasefire violations diminished significantly, the lives of civilians would still be threatened.

The Mission deployed 11,616 patrols in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in 2020 and facilitated 1,573 “windows of silence” – localized adherence to the ceasefire – to enable repairs to and maintenance of 119 critical civilian infrastructure facilities benefitting millions of civilians on both sides of the contact line.

### CENTRAL AND WESTERN UKRAINE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The SMM continued to implement its mandate throughout Ukraine in an adjusted operational posture due to the pandemic. The Mission’s eight monitoring teams in central and western Ukraine continued to monitor, among other things, the security situation, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the situation of minorities and internally displaced persons. Teams also monitored the impact of, and reaction to, decisions and policies adopted

by the government in order to gather information and to monitor the security situation throughout Ukraine, freedom of the media and expression, and mandate-related high-profile court cases.

### GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Mission continued to integrate a gender perspective across its activities, with special attention to its monitoring and reporting. As an early response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing measures introduced, the SMM provided online access for all OSCE staff to its awareness-raising and internal capacity-building activities in the area of gender mainstreaming, including by delivering a webinar series reaching over 750 Mission members. The SMM also marked the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” and the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security with a series of activities for both internal and external audiences.

### PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

From late March onwards, strict mitigation measures related to the COVID-19 outbreak meant that outreach activities were provided online. Starting from April, the Mission carried out 32 online presentations to raise awareness of the SMM’s role, activities and objectives, responded to 84 press queries and issued six press releases. Public engagement continued on the SMM section of the OSCE website and through social media, specifically on Twitter (30,400 followers) and Facebook (19,200 followers), featuring, among other things, the Mission’s bimonthly status reports. The Mission launched *Women on the Contact Line*, a book presenting 15 profiles of women – community leaders and Monitoring Officers contributing to sustainable peace and to building bridges between communities – from both sides of the contact line. The publication, available online in English, Russian and Ukrainian, had reached over 100,000 people by 31 December. The Mission previously shared these 15 stories through its social media channels, reaching about 500,000 people.

### TAISIIA AND THE DONETSK FILTRATION STATION

When the conflict first came to Taisiia’s hometown of Yasynuvata, in the Donetsk region, in the summer of 2014, her daily commute to work became perilous, but the 31-year-old engineer thought it would all be over in a few days. Taisiia is a lab technician at the Donetsk Filtration Station (DFS), a vital civilian infrastructure facility located in the middle of an area that has regularly been the scene of some of the most intense fighting over the years. Today, she still finds herself making the same journey to the lab, but SMM patrols make that journey safer.

The DFS is a key supplier of potable water, but firing positions are located within a couple of hundred metres of the facility, placing it and its workers, including Taisiia, in the line of fire. During some exchanges, bullets and mortar shells have hit the plant directly. Since 2014, the SMM has been facilitating daily localized adherence to the ceasefire – “windows of silence” – to ensure safe passage for Taisiia and her colleagues to the DFS and a regular supply of clean drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people on both sides of the contact line.

Even as the pandemic began to take its toll, the operation of the DFS and other critical civilian infrastructure remained vital for the Mission because it is a priority for Taisiia and thousands more who depend on it.

## COVID-19 TASK FORCE

The SMM's response to the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020 as the crisis began to take hold. The Chief Monitor established a COVID-19 Task Force at the SMM Head Office to immediately develop policies and to begin to provide him with advice and recommendations to monitor, prevent, contain and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus among Mission members.

Chaired by the Mission's Chief of Staff, the task-force is a multidisciplinary co-ordination body, whose members are drawn from senior management and all Head Office units, with regular engagement from the management of monitoring teams in the field.

The Task Force enabled a co-ordinated SMM approach, anchoring responses through scenario-based policy co-ordination; close collaboration and consideration of the multifaceted effects of the pandemic on operations, administration, security and the physical and mental health of staff; and communication needs. Responses included issuing a package of early (in the first week) guidance on COVID-19 response measures and co-ordinating the development and regular review of a series of protocols, including the SMM's medical emergency response plan, rules on quarantine/self-isolation, case reporting and testing, office protocols, sourcing and distribution of COVID-19 protective equipment for all staff and security advisories. The Task Force kept Mission members informed through internal newsletters and updates. The Task Force also ensured continuous SMM intranet communication regarding the Mission's COVID-19 response across all disciplines. It also facilitated the establishment of an ad hoc movement control mechanism to ensure the safe duty transport of Mission members within Ukraine, and it proactively conducted table-top medevac exercises with monitoring teams together with the OSCE medical evacuation provider. The lessons learned from the latter exercise were shared with the OSCE Secretariat for the benefit of the entire Organization.

### Ceasefire violations 2020 vs 2019



2020: **134,783**

**55** per cent reduction

2019: **299,633**

### SMM AT A GLANCE (as of 31 December)



Number of patrols

Total  
**16,323**

Donetsk Monitoring Team: 6,488  
Luhansk Monitoring Team: 5,128



Number of cameras

**28** cameras in

**23** locations



UAVs:

**3,795**

Operational flights for a total of

**2,334** hours



Number of reports

**310**

Daily reports

**24**

Status reports

**5**



Facilitated windows of silence

**1,573** windows of silence

Donetsk region: 677  
Luhansk region: 896

for repairs of

**119**

critical civilian infrastructure facilities



A monitoring officer on patrol facilitating electricity repairs near Berdianske, Donetsk region, August 2020. (OSCE/Anna Andrusenko)



Perechyn Roma community in Zakarpattia, January 2020. (OSCE/Oleksandr Solonenko)



Monitoring officer operating a drone near Stanytsia Luhanska, Luhansk region, 6 September 2020. (OSCE/Anton Yermakov)



A monitoring officer at the Stanytsia Luhanska crossing point in Luhansk region, 19 November 2020. (OSCE/Brennan Dathan)



Monitoring officers talk to civilians near Olenivka, Donetsk region, 7 September 2020. (OSCE/Alfred Kueppers)

# Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Project Co-ordinator: Ambassador Henrik Villadsen

Budget: €3,618,500 (Unified budget), €2,204,136 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 4 international, 97 local

[www.osce.org/project-co-ordinator-in-ukraine](http://www.osce.org/project-co-ordinator-in-ukraine)

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator's main focus in 2020 was overcoming pandemic difficulties to continue its support to Ukraine's efforts to deal with security challenges. By moving most of its operations to online and remote work in early spring, the Co-ordinator managed to support progress in a wide array of spheres, such as ensuring environmental and chemical security, enhancing the framework for humanitarian demining, promoting good practices for civil society organizations and self-regulation for higher standards of journalism, continuing dialogue on judicial reforms, raising the awareness of stakeholders of constitutional justice principles and supporting trial monitoring for child-friendly justice, among other areas.

## HELPING TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING LOCKDOWNS

As Ukraine imposed a nationwide lockdown in late March to curb the first wave of COVID-19, in April the OSCE Project Co-ordinator produced and sent to the regions of Ukraine 2,000 posters warning of higher risks of trafficking in human beings, cybercrime and domestic violence. The posters, placed in the offices of social service providers, contained useful information on where victims of the above-mentioned crimes could get help. Governmental and non-governmental hotlines registered an increase in calls for help in domestic violence cases, making both the warning and further assistance provided by the OSCE highly relevant. In 2020, the Co-ordinator completed a three-year endeavour to train personnel for the "102" police emergency hotline to deal with such calls. In total, 830 operators and dispatchers from across the country learned how to identify and assist people suffering from domestic abuse. In addition to earlier practical training programmes for patrol police officers, the Co-ordinator produced and handed over to police training institutions an online course for cadets. The Co-ordinator also held nine three-day training sessions for 170 psychologists from across the country on the organization and



As part of a press tour organized by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, journalists visit a Social Services Centre in the town of Vyshneve to learn about the work of psychologists in domestic violence cases, Vyshneve, Kyiv Oblast, 17 November 2020. (OSCE/Kostiantyn Chernichkin)

implementation of a corrective programme for abusers. This year also capped a multi-year effort to cover all the regions of the country with such training. In addition, new versions of a manual and a workbook on the organization of corrective programmes were produced and published.

As part of a systemic response to the problem, the Co-ordinator contributed to the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign, which focuses on promoting responses to violence at home in view of pandemic challenges. The Co-ordinator's campaign included a press tour for journalists with visits to police training institutions and social services, as well as posts on social media and work with opinion leaders.

## LOCAL ELECTIONS AMID PANDEMIC RISKS

The pandemic coincided with the conduct of local elections countrywide for new administrative and territorial divisions on 25 October 2020. The decentralization reform established new communities with much broader powers for officials, so election-related education efforts took on special importance. With face masks and sanitizers provided for safety, the Co-ordinator organized 288 community meetings across the country in the



Cadets from the National Police Academy in Kyiv at a lesson during a press tour organized by the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine to highlight training for law enforcement officials to combat domestic violence, Kyiv, 12 November 2020. (OSCE/Kostiantyn Chernichkin)

pre-electoral period in October. “What is the right way to wear that mask – with the blue- or the white-coloured side facing in?” was among the easier questions we received. Others ranged from how to fill in the new ballot papers to what changes decentralization [would bring] to communities”, said Tetiana Kavalchuk, an activist from the NGO Committee of Voters of Ukraine, who travelled across the central regions of the country for the community meetings.

As the electoral legislation was amended recently, the Co-ordinator’s Vyborkom online training tool for election commissioners was in high demand. Also, for the first time in the country’s history, a special application – a chatbot for Facebook and Telegram developed by the Co-ordinator – referred voters and candidates to a wide range of questions, including on issues such as the addresses of polling stations, voting procedures, COVID-19 safety measures on election day and even the voting results.

E-governance tools gained new importance in 2020. A conference system provided by the Project Co-ordinator enabled the Central Election Commission to stream their meetings online with no need for election participants, observers or the media to be physically present. The online e-cabinet, another e-governance tool developed by the Co-ordinator, helped the territorial commissions to perform their duties by simplifying the challenging task of aggregating voting data and establishing election results.

### PROMOTING QUALITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Ukraine’s Ministry of Education and Science approved new requirements for a master’s degree programme in law. Developed with the assistance of the Co-ordinator, the programme will start in the 2020/2021 academic year. The new educational standard lists the competencies that the students enrolled in the programme should obtain and sets criteria for the evaluation of law faculties in the process of certification of universities and their educational programmes. On average, over 7,000 students graduate annually from Ukraine’s universities with a Master of Laws degree, so the standard will contribute to improving the quality of education for a new generation of legal professionals in the country. To promote standards-



The chatbot provides information about various aspects of local elections for voters, candidates and election commissioners. (OSCE)

### BENEFICIARIES OF ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- 5,404 participants in election-related awareness-raising meetings (80 per cent of whom were women)
- 28,000 users of the chatbot to find responses to election-related questions
- 58 meetings of the Central Election Commission live-streamed during the elections using the conference system provided by the OSCE
- 918 out of 1,660 territorial election commissions used the e-cabinet to aggregate the election results
- 115,000 active users in the Vyborkom online training system, with 2.2 million views of training materials and almost 3,000 replies to online queries



based high-quality legal education, the Government also introduced a unified state exam for Master of Laws graduates. The exam will be developed with the Co-ordinator’s support and piloted in 2021.



A poster explaining the particularities of local elections produced by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator is placed at the entrance to the local administration in Sviatohirsk, Donetsk Oblast, 13 October 2020. (OSCE/Victoria Bondar)

# Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk

Chief Observer: Ambassador György Varga

Budget: €1,404,400 (for the period from 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2021)

Staff: 21 observers, 2 Vienna-based staff (Chief of Fund Administration and Administrative/Finance Assistant)

[www.osce.org/observer-mission-at-russian-checkpoints-gukovo-and-donetsk](http://www.osce.org/observer-mission-at-russian-checkpoints-gukovo-and-donetsk)

For its seventh consecutive year, the Observer Mission (OM) continued to fulfil its mandate at the two Russian border checkpoints (BCPs) of Gukovo and Donetsk. During 2020, especially under COVID-19 conditions, which posed a number of challenges for the OM's everyday activities, the Mission, despite its small size and limited observation area, was able to fulfil its mandate and maintained its capability of being continuously present at the two aforementioned BCPs, keeping the OSCE participating States informed about movement across the border.

Since its inception, the Mission has carried out its activities based on a mandate that tasked the OSCE international observers with "monitoring and reporting on the situation at the checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk, as well as on the movements across the border".

The OM follows the principles of impartiality and transparency in conducting its activities, with the aim of providing the participating States with information and facts relevant to the crisis in and around Ukraine by observing the situation and movements across the border at the two BCPs. The Mission's reports represent a unique and reliable source of information on movements across border at the checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk as part of the overall international effort aimed at fostering stability and security in the region. Originally issued in English, these reports have also been distributed in Russian since July 2017. During the last year, the Mission also issued five spot reports concerning Russian convoys bound for Ukraine consisting of trucks bearing the inscription "Humanitarian aid from the Russian Federation" (in Russian). The OSCE Permanent Council extended the mandate of the Observer Mission until 31 January 2021. As of 2018, following a decision of the OSCE Permanent Council, the duration of the Mission's mandate was extended to four months instead of three.

The Mission continues to implement a 24-hour shift system at the two border checkpoints and is currently working with 22 observers – including the Chief Observer – seconded from 15 participating States.

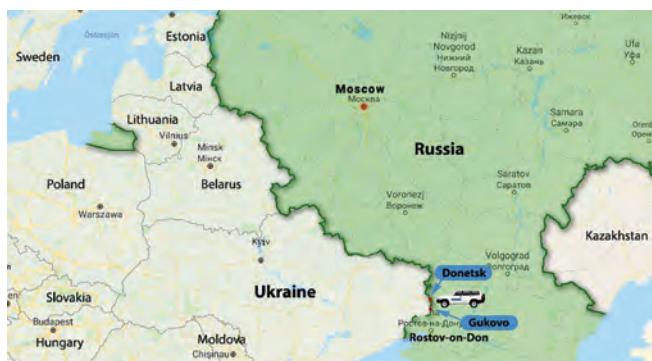
## CONTACTS WITH RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES AND THE MEDIA

The Observer Mission has continued to strengthen its working relations with the authorities present at both border checkpoints, as well as with the Rostov Regional Administration and the Rostov representative office of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, and with local authorities in Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, including the mayor and representatives of the security and safety services.

In response to the COVID-19 situation, the Chief Observer maintained close co-operation with the representatives of the local hospital and the Chief State Sanitary Physician of the Russian Federation — the authority responsible for epidemiological control — to ensure co-ordination of COVID-19 preventive measures and to mitigate their impact on the Mission's activity. Thanks to good co-operation and the OM's participation in the OSCE donation campaign in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the local hospital was the beneficiary of a small donation aimed at providing personal protective equipment for the medical staff.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, fewer official meetings took place, with the exception of regular visits to the Regional Representation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rostov-on-Don. With other actors, the Chief Observer maintained working contacts remotely in the majority of cases.

The Observer Mission also continued to engage with representatives from local and regional newspapers in order to help the local population gain a better understanding of the Mission's mandate and its role in addressing the crisis in and around Ukraine.



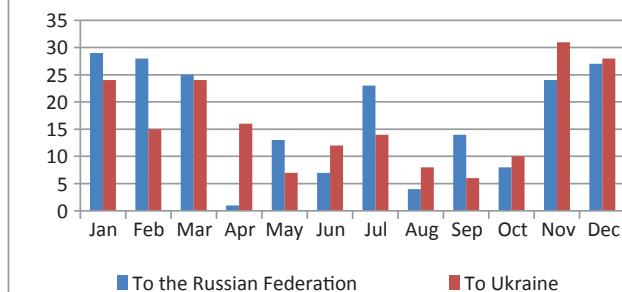
**Since its deployment in 2014, the OM has observed the following movements:**

- 22,677,031 people (by 31 December 2020)
- 39,203 people in military-style outfits
- 2,375 families in moving mode
- 196 aircraft (flying over the territory of the Russian Federation)
- 134 funeral vans
- 665 ambulances
- 219,158 trucks
- 49,396 cargo minivans
- 99 Russian convoys
- 6,142 trains

**OBSERVATION TRENDS**

In 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, overall traffic at the two BCPs significantly decreased. Responding to the pandemic, the host country closed its borders for the majority of foreigners from 18 March 2020. The Mission's observer teams noted a decrease in the number of people in military-style outfits crossing at the two checkpoints compared with 2019. The number of passenger cars crossing the border decreased as well throughout the year, while the number of trucks slightly increased. The average number of cross-border movements by people increased a little during the summer.

**Persons in military-style outfits**



**BORDER-CROSSING OBSERVATIONS  
IN 2019 AND 2020**

2019	2020
3,976,659 people	2,491,640 people
42,603 trucks	43,649 trucks
1,000 people in military-style uniforms	398 people in military-style uniforms
69 ambulances	43 ambulances
13 funeral vans	14 funeral vans
12 convoys	5 Russian convoys



Border observers at the Ukrainian - Russian state border, Donetsk border checkpoint, 27 August 2020. (OSCE/Dmitriy Posledov)



OSCE border observers preparing their vehicles before starting their 24-hours shift at the Ukrainian-Russian state border, 16 December 2020. (OSCE/ Irina Roibu)

# Centre in Ashgabat

Head of Centre: Ambassador Natalya Drozd

Budget: €1,661,200 (Unified budget), €164,580(Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 6 international, 23 local

[www.osce.org/centre-in-ashgabat](http://www.osce.org/centre-in-ashgabat)

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat remained active as ever in 2020 despite COVID-19 restrictions. To do this, the Centre moved its events online and launched additional activities involving remote work on the part of experts. The Centre implemented projects on preventive diplomacy, and border management; trade and transport facilitation, and environmental protection; rule of law and media reform; and it placed special emphasis on measures to prevent COVID-19 and to address the consequences of the global pandemic across different spheres. The Centre worked with Turkmenistan's institutions to strengthen their capacity in areas such as controlling strategic goods, ensuring good governance, promoting water management and ecologic protection in the oil and gas sector, enhancing the Ombudsperson's Office, implementing the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2016–2020 and strengthening the criminal justice and penitentiary systems. The Centre's activities fostered the host government's ownership in building the capacity of border and police officials, enhancing energy efficiency and promoting the freedom of the journalistic profession. The Centre's experts prepared and revised strategic documents, legislative commentaries and training modules on the following issues: money laundering, terrorist financing and corruption, foreign investments, renewable energy and energy diplomacy, the digital transformation of the media and freedom of expression.

## PROMOTING PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY INSTRUMENTS

The constructive role of neutral states in conflict prevention was the focus of online lectures for future diplomats that the Centre organized to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality status. A high-level career diplomat from Italy and a prominent professor from the Netherlands lectured over 60 students and teachers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Institute of International Relations and from the International University for the Humanities and Development in Turkmenistan. The lectures introduced future diplomats to the history of neutrality and security of small states, as well as the evolution of European security following the Cold War. They highlighted the nature of preventive diplomacy and negotiation, the value of neutrality and the OSCE's role in addressing protracted conflicts.

*"One of the pillars of Turkmenistan's neutrality is preventive diplomacy, which enhances the country's valued contribution to stability and sustainable development in the region and beyond", said Natalya Drozd, Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, in the context of one of the lectures. "As the OSCE is a primary instrument for conflict prevention and resolution, we organized this event to emphasize the opportunities of neutral states for resolving disputes and preventing conflicts at early stages."*

Lectures and seminars on preventive diplomacy have become a traditional part of the Centre's co-operation with the host country. Their purpose is to contribute to the enhancement of the professional skills of those embarking on a career in diplomacy.



Students at the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan during an OSCE-organized online lecture on the role of neutral states in conflict prevention, Ashgabat, 19 November 2020. (Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan)

## CENTRE FOR ENERGY-SAVING TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The year 2020 marked the inauguration of the Centre for Energy-Saving Technologies (CEST) at the Turkmen State Energy Institute in Mary (TSEI). Equipped with state-of-the-art technology the CEST serves as a research and knowledge-sharing platform on energy security and energy-saving issues for the TSEI's teaching staff and other national stakeholders as well as the general public.

Kakageldy Saryyev, Director of the Renewable Energy Research and Production Centre at the TSEI, noted that,



Students from the Turkmen State Energy Institute in Mary visit the OSCE-supported Centre for Energy-Saving Technologies, 3 December 2020.  
(Turkmen State Energy Institute in Mary)

*"The opening of the CEST, with the OSCE Centre's support, is a very important event for us, primarily in the context of studying world trends in the energy sphere, researching the integration of renewable energy, including the launch of the renewable energy portal for information exchange, developing research and innovative programmes on energy saving for different sectors of the economy, as well as capacity-building and awareness-raising."*

The Centre opened the CEST to support the implementation of the National Programme for Energy Saving 2018–2024, an important initiative on the part of Turkmenistan that demonstrates its commitment to promoting energy efficiency. The opening of the CEST marked a new milestone in the successful long-term co-operation between the OSCE Centre and the TSEI, illustrated by various joint activities addressing energy diplomacy, alternative energy and other topics. Events held in 2020 included a webinar on net energy consumption as a new ecological and energy-saving system.

The CEST is expected to enhance the sustainability of the OSCE Centre's activities in support of Turkmenistan's efforts to promote energy efficiency and security.

## NATIONAL TRAINERS READY TO DELIVER TRAINING ON JOURNALISTS' RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Nine journalists and lawyers will join a pool of national experts as a result of an advanced online train-the-trainer course on the rights and duties of journalists. Future trainers will include media professionals and representatives of the Bar Association, the Supreme Court of Turkmenistan and the Institute of State, Law and Democracy.

The training of trainers is organized as part of the Centre's support for the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2016–2020, which envisaged training on the rights and duties of journalists for court workers, lawyers and journalists. Delivered by experts from Kyrgyzstan and the United Kingdom, the course enhanced the participants' knowledge of international agreements and legislation on freedom of expression, professional standards for the work of journalists and the legal and social status of journalists. Future trainers learned a training and planning methodology and practised designing and delivering training sessions.

*"The implementation of OSCE projects addressing various issues of media freedom and development moved OSCE-Turkmenistan co-operation to a new level"*, said Irina Imamkuliyeva, an editor at the *Neytralniy Turkmenistan* newspaper. *"The training of the first national experts on the rights and duties of journalists will step up our joint efforts aimed at the practical implementation of international standards and OSCE commitments in the national media sector."*

International experts also designed a module for a training course on the rights and duties of journalists that future trainers will use when delivering training courses for their peers.

The newly trained trainers are expected to take the lead in further promoting awareness of international standards pertaining to freedom of the journalistic profession.



Participants during a practical session held as part of a Centre-organized advanced online train-the-trainer course on the rights and duties of journalists, Ashgabat, 6 November 2020. (OSCE)

# Programme Office in Bishkek

Head of Mission: Ambassador Pierre von Arx

Budget: €6,811,000 (Unified Budget), €600,531 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure, including the OSCE Academy in Bishkek)

Staff: 13 international, 110 local

[www.osce.org/programme-office-in-bishkek](http://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-bishkek)

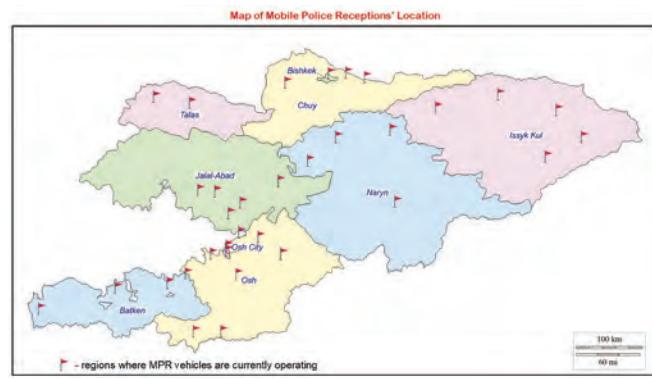
During 2020, the Programme Office in Bishkek continued the implementation of programmatic activities in accordance with its mandate, in response to the reform priorities set out by the host country and in co-operation with partners from state institutions, international organizations and civil society. The Programme Office focused on supporting the host country in reforming the justice sector, implementing election reform, continuing building open and resilient societies and developing the country's regions, facilitating trade, strengthening efforts to combat corruption on all levels and countering terrorism and transnational threats such as human trafficking. New initiatives on promoting youth engagement and gender equality in the host country were also supported.

## ENHANCING COMMUNITY POLICING AMID COVID-19

The Programme Office continues to support the Ministry of Interior, as well as enhance co-operation with other Ministries and local councils, in its efforts to increase public trust and improve public-police co-operation through Mobile Police Reception vehicles (MPRs). MPRs are customized minivans with the basic equipment required for a functioning police reception, including means of communication and folders with relevant operational information. The MPRs can move in and out of communities as necessary.

Thirty-three MPR vehicles are operating in 27 of 56 territorial police departments throughout the country and providing assistance to 1,042 rural communities covering 3.5 million people. Throughout 2020, MPR teams conducted over 11,000 visits (compared with 2,500 visits the year before) to rural communities, with more than 12,000 people approaching the MPR teams with different requests and enquiries.

The added value of MPR activities was highlighted once again during the COVID-19 outbreak. The crews continue to work in remote communities and inform the population



about the need to follow recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health, observe self-isolation regulations and take a responsible approach to their health and the health of their loved ones.

## KYRGYZSTAN ON THE PATH TO DIGITALIZATION

The Programme Office has been closely co-operating with the Electronic Interoperability Center – Tunduk state enterprise by providing comprehensive expert and technical assistance to support the host country's digitalization efforts. Tunduk is the central system for digitizing access to public services and connecting state structures to one another. Tunduk includes a unified identification system – a platform that enables all citizens of Kyrgyzstan to access the electronic portals of public service providers through a secure method of user authorization. With the Programme Office's support, Tunduk will substantially decrease the number of bureaucratic procedures, cutting red tape and minimizing risks of corrupt practices, while increasing the efficiency of government, thereby making it easier for the population to receive public services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

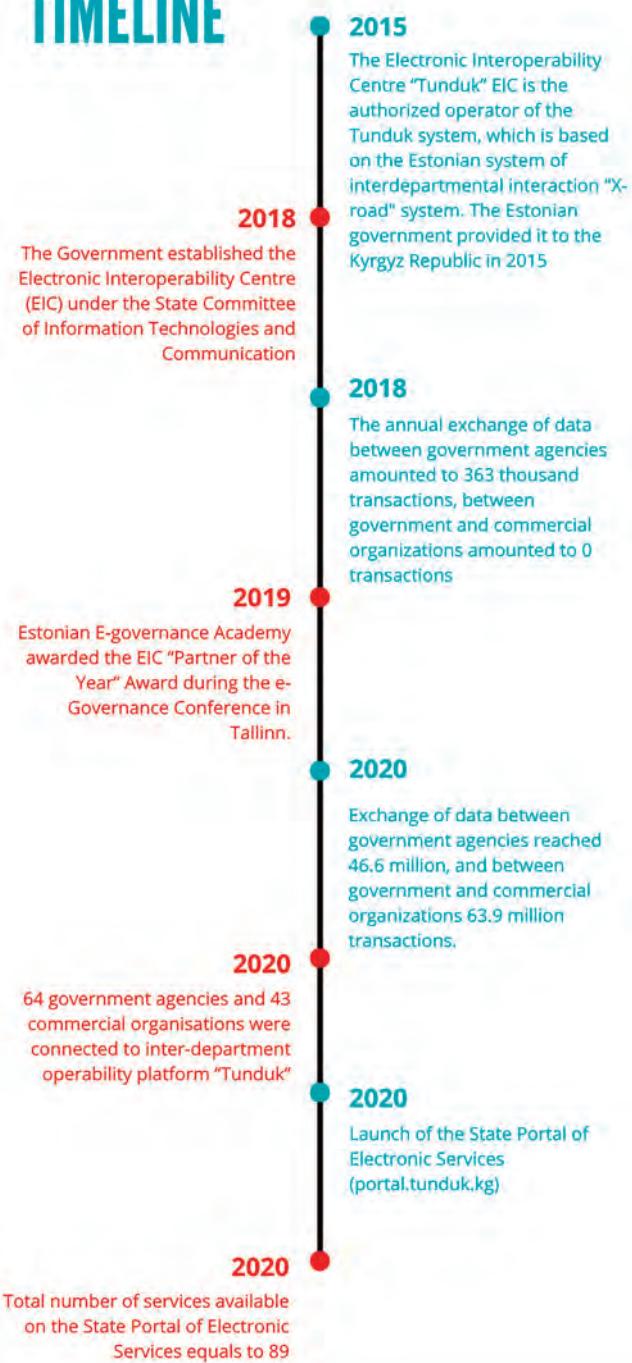


A police officer speaking to children in a village in Issyk-Kul province, Kyrgyzstan, 21 November 2019. (OSCE/Chyngyz Zhanibekov)

## SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KYRGYZSTAN

The Programme Office supports the development of small and medium-sized enterprises through Entrepreneurship Support Centres (ESCs). Currently, five ESCs in the cities of Batken, Jalal-Abad, Karakol, Osh and Talas, are being

# TUNDUK TIMELINE



Timeline of digitalization activities supported by the Programme Office. (OSCE)

supported by the Programme Office through technical assistance. The ESCs provide free-of-charge business consultations to current and prospective entrepreneurs. Since their opening, more than 900 entrepreneurs have worked with the ESCs, the majority of them women and former labour migrants. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the business community has faced a number of challenges, including threats to their livelihoods, making the contribution of the ESCs even more relevant. Aigul Asakeeva, director of the "Ethno-Café Dastorkon" in Karakol, is one of the ESCs' beneficiaries. "Thanks to



Aigul Asakeeva at her café Dastorkon in the town of Karakol, Kyrgyzstan, 7 January 2021. (Chyngyz Namazaliev)

"Since conflict situations are not uncommon in border areas, we constantly hold events among women and youth, calling for tolerance and friendship among peoples. For example, together with the border population of Tajikistan, we hold festivals and friendly events."

**Sairangul Zulpukarova**  
member of a WIG

this project, we could promote the café online, improve engagement with clients and expand our work", she said about the support for business promotion that she received during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT DURING COVID-19

The Women Initiative Groups (WIGs) is an informal grass-roots network of active women leaders who come together to address social problems in their communities, including conflict prevention and resolution, gender-based violence and local issues related to COVID-19. It also promotes the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as increased women's participation in political and public life.

Since 2011 the WIGs have expanded their network. Today, with the support of the Programme Office, the network is truly national, with 28 WIGs in all provinces of the country.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the WIGs collected data through surveys on the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence (GBV), after which they mapped the most vulnerable groups and communities and provided psychological support to victims. The WIGs also distributed humanitarian aid, produced and distributed personal protective equipment and raised awareness about sanitary and hygiene measures. This was made possible through the Programme Office's expert and technical support, including in monitoring and evaluating the WIGs' activities.

## OSCE ACADEMY IN BISHKEK

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek is a well-known education and research institution that provides high-quality graduate education to young people from Central Asia, Afghanistan and Mongolia and beyond. For the 2019/2020 academic year, the Academy received over 2,500 applications for two graduate programmes. Following a highly competitive selection process, 50 students were accepted. The Academy also hosted a number of events, including a summer school, specialized seminars and visits by guest lecturers. Due to COVID-19, the Academy switched to distance learning, and the 2020/2021 academic year started online.

# Programme Office in Dushanbe

Head of Office: Ambassador Valeriu Chiveri

Budget: €7,311,600 (Unified budget), €1,520,812 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 24 international, 145 local (including 30 under extrabudgetary projects)

<http://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-dushanbe>

In 2020, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe undertook sustained efforts to adjust its operations to the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and to carry out planned programmatic activities.

## PROMOTING COMMUNITY POLICING

The Programme Office has been contributing to advancing community policing as a cornerstone of the comprehensive police reform since 2011. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the OSCE jointly implemented activities aimed at building public trust and fostering co-operation between the police and citizens. Since 2018, the Office has supported the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan in establishing model police stations (MPSs) in the regions.

The first three locations to host MPSs were established in Hissar, a famous tourist site; in Essaboy, a remote area; and in Safeddara, a ski resort. The Deputy Interior Minister, Major-General Ibrohimzoda Nozim, has been a driving force in setting up the MPSs. “We hope that the established model police station will help to build a close relationship with the local population in order to create accountability and trust between the police and civil society”, he said about the project.

The community policing concept will be further strengthened through the introduction of mobile police receptions to ensure access to police services in remote areas.



From left to right: Ambassador Valeriu Chiveri, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe; Colonel Rahmatullo Saidzoda, Head of Varzob's District Interior Department; Major General Nozim Ibrohimzoda, Deputy Minister of Interior; and Colonel Valikhon Khamdamzoda, the National Co-ordinator for Police Reform, at the inauguration ceremony for the opening of a model police station in the Varzob district of Tajikistan, 1 September 2020. (OSCE/Bahrom Alimov)



Personal protective equipment is handed over to the Regional Health Administration of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, Khorog, Tajikistan, 25 July 2020. (OSCE/Umed Qurbonov)

## EFFORTS TO COMBAT COVID-19

The Office ensured a quick response to the host country's request to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Personal protective equipment and medical supplies were provided to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence. Special attention was devoted to an information campaign on COVID-19. The Office, together with UNICEF and the WHO, distributed more than 250,000 leaflets on WHO-recommended COVID-19 prevention and response measures in the regions of the country, including remote areas.

## COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Preventing and combating violence against women is a priority for the Office. It has supported the nationwide network of 14 Women's Resource Centres (WRCs), which assist victims of domestic violence by providing free psychosocial and legal counselling and vocational skills training to facilitate financial independence. The initiative promotes the implementation of international commitments and national legislation aimed at eliminating all forms of domestic violence. In 2020, despite challenges related to COVID-19, all WRCs provided free psychosocial and legal consultations to victims of domestic violence,



Dissemination of leaflets and brochures in support of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”, Khujand, Sogd Region, Tajikistan, 25 November 2020. (*Musavvara Inomzoda*)

both women and men, including in remote mountainous regions with poor road infrastructure, where such services are otherwise unavailable. In total, the WRCs provided 1,983 psychosocial and 2,184 legal support services to 918 clients.

### BUILDING CAPACITY ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The lack of disaster and emergency risk management capacity at the local level hampers the resilience of communities. To help mitigate risks related to natural hazards and to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Office and the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST) conducted 50 awareness-raising sessions for some 1,000 community members and capacity-building seminars for members of 80 local disaster management committees. The aim of the community-based approach to disaster risk reduction is to reduce people’s vulnerabilities by strengthening the capacities of individuals and families to prepare and respond to natural disasters. It addresses poverty, social inequalities, environmental resource depletion and degradation, and the lack of reliable information. For Umedali Sayduniev, Training Coordinator at the RCST, capacity-building is key to building resilience



### DIGITALIZATION HELPS IMPROVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

The digitalization of co-operation and interaction between the local business community and potential international business partners and investors was advanced through assistance provided to the host country to launch digital initiatives to promote business and the investment climate. The Office supported the development of a B2B portal ([b2b.tj](http://b2b.tj)), which has registered a total of 362 companies from 18 countries. The portal includes comprehensive information about Tajikistan, investment opportunities and the main regional and international events of interest to the private sector. Some 8,167 users accessed the platform in 2020.



Participants of a community awareness session on disaster preparedness in the Rasht District of the Rasht Valley, Tajikistan, 20 August 2020. (*RCST/Umedali Sayduniev*)

against disasters: “These sessions will establish community-based groups, where members of target villages will work on preparedness towards disaster and emergency risk reduction”.

### THE BORDER MANAGEMENT STAFF COLLEGE

Since 1999, the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) has been the OSCE’s flagship regional project. Throughout this period, the BMSC successfully delivered 171 specialized training courses and thematic events, including 27 one-month intensive staff courses and three one-year postgraduate diploma courses in border security and management for senior leadership for no fewer than 3,781 border security management officials (including 703 women) from 46 OSCE participating states, 10 Partners for Co-operation and 6 non-OSCE countries. The BMSC successfully adjusted its activities in 2020 to the pandemic circumstances and delivered its programmes in full using online, hybrid and face-to-face modalities.

# Programme Office in Nur-Sultan

Head of Office: Ambassador György Szabó

Budget: €2,232,700 (Unified budget), €39,629 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 6 international, 22 local

[www.osce.org/programme-office-in-nur-sultan](http://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-nur-sultan)

In 2020, the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan developed new innovative approaches with institutions from government, civil society, academia, the private sector and the international community to promote security in Kazakhstan and the Central Asia region. The Office implemented creative solutions to engage stakeholders and the public to promote media freedom, sustainable economic growth and good economic governance. It developed new ways to engage youth and a special project to build capacity for the host country to aid victims of domestic violence. The Office continued its extrabudgetary project on police reform with support from the Government of Norway. In total, the Office implemented 98 events in all three security dimensions with over 3,000 participants nationwide.

## ADAPTING TO NEW CHALLENGES

In response to restrictions and duty-of-care obligations, the Office began conducting events virtually, working remotely and advising partners and key stakeholders to do the same. All personnel were given personal protective equipment and advised to engage partners online to adapt project implementation strategies where possible to address any challenges that might arise in the host country as a result of the pandemic.

## COVID-19 AND ASSISTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In recognition of the increased rate of reported domestic violence around the world during lockdowns, the Office launched a special initiative to support crisis centres in eight regions of the host country by providing additional premises and hiring experts to render comprehensive assistance to victims. Staff at the facilities were trained to identify victims and to help them seek assistance from medical and state experts. The Office also produced videos in Kazakh and Russian to bring public attention to these issues and to

the role crisis centres play in addressing critical needs, in particular for women and children.

## PROTECTING BORDERS AND CYBERSPACE

The Office trained law enforcement officers from across the country to combat transnational organized crime – in particular, cybercrime – and provided portable devices to help border guards verify the authenticity of travel documents. Crisis reporting, information literacy and fact-checking were the focus of the tenth Central Asian Internet Forum, which brought together some 150 practitioners and experts from the region and beyond through an online platform.

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

The Office continued its co-operation with Kazakhstan's Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Ministry on follow-up legislation to the new Environmental Code to harmonize it with the host country's strategic documents and obligations under the conventions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.



A child enjoys a colouring book at a domestic violence shelter in Aktobe. The OSCE Programme Office built the capacity of crisis centres in Aktobe and seven other regions of Kazakhstan October 2020. (OSCE)

## ENGAGING YOUTH FOR COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY

In line with the Albanian Chairmanship's priority on fostering youth exchange and the political participation of young people, the Office organized cross-dimensional activities that engaged over 250 young people regionally. The annual Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN) held an alumni reunion together with the Programme Office in Bishkek for university students and CAYN alumni from Central Asia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. It organized a Model OSCE conference in the nation's capital, which introduced graduate students and young professionals to the OSCE concept of comprehensive and co-operative security and its application to real-world challenges. It organized the Central Asia Leadership Programme dedicated to the Year of the Volunteer in Kazakhstan as well as online training seminars for young professionals and civil servants from Central Asia and Afghanistan on climate change mitigation.



Participants in the Model OSCE conference, Nur-Sultan, 20 February 2020. (OSCE/Meruyert Syzdykbekova)

## GOOD ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

In the area of good economic governance, the Office focused on projects aimed at combating corruption, the financing of terrorism and money laundering. It supported both governmental and non-governmental partners in raising awareness and addressing the OECD Anti-Corruption Network's recommendations for Kazakhstan by implementing international standards.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW

The Office continued supporting efforts aimed at enhancing human rights and fundamental freedoms by strengthening the professional skills of diverse stakeholders and facilitating dialogue on these issues. The Office hosted an online discussion and a series of human rights-related awareness-raising and learning workshops held for local community representatives as part of the "Newcomer Fest on Human Rights".

Through an extrabudgetary project on police reform and with support from the Government of Norway, the Office co-organized a series of training seminars on a service-oriented approach in policing for faculty from five police academies. The Office assisted the Interior Ministry in developing guidelines for the work of district police inspectors in the framework of this project.

## EXPERT SUPPORT TO TACKLE PYRAMID SCHEMES

Maxat Shagdarov, from the Agency for Regulation and Development of the Financial Market of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has seen first-hand how the OSCE can help: *"One of the problems that countries have been facing lately is countering financial pyramid schemes. The OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan provided an opportunity for our specialists to learn so much about the principles of countering these schemes."* He noted that the principles taught at OSCE-supported events help the Agency's specialists in their daily work: *"It is especially important that there is an opportunity to exchange experience and information directly with an expert invited by the OSCE. The information that was presented by the expert is presented in a simple and clear manner, which contributes to a better assimilation of the material."*



## A PARTNER FOR MEDIA FREEDOM

For Diana Okremova, Director of the Legal Media Centre (a Kazakhstan-based non-governmental organization), the OSCE has always been a reliable partner for the most important regional events on media freedom and related legislation. *"The OSCE is a long-term partner in which you can be confident,"* she said. Okremova notes that much of her organization's work takes staff members around the country to train journalists and human rights experts on relevant legislation and international standards and that the OSCE has been instrumental in providing political and financial support to her initiative: *"The Programme Office in Nur-Sultan can always be counted on to help in relevant work in the rural regions of Kazakhstan, where we discuss key details of changes in media legislation and law enforcement practice. ... In addition to knowing the key legal issues related to freedom of the media, OSCE representatives are always actively involved in our events in person and online."*



# Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

Project Co-ordinator: Ambassador John MacGregor

Budget: €2,499,200 (Unified budget), €149,365 (Extrabudgetary actual expenditure)

Staff: 4 international, 35 local

[www.osce.org/project-co-ordinator-in-uzbekistan](http://www.osce.org/project-co-ordinator-in-uzbekistan)

In 2020, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan (PCUz) continued to support the host country's efforts to address transnational threats, promote transparency in governance, fight corruption, combat money laundering and counteract trafficking in human beings and drugs. In addition, the PCUz helped to mitigate the worst effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the spread of false information, its economic toll on women and the rise of domestic violence cases.

## RESPONDING TO THE TRANSNATIONAL THREATS RELATED TO COVID-19 IN UZBEKISTAN

"At the outbreak of the pandemic, I held a few Vancouver/Tashkent Zoom meetings with PCUz staff during which we initially discussed working from home to keep the staff safe and then carried on to how we could respond as an OSCE field operation. We found ourselves focusing on the immediate needs of our project partners. The police on the streets of Tashkent who were enforcing 'stay at home' measures were urgently in need of more protective equipment so that they could avoid becoming virus spreaders during their necessary interaction with the public. The staff of the Ombudsman institution were in need of protective equipment so that they could continue their important work in monitoring closed institutions for women and juveniles, some of the most vulnerable in society. The PCUz met the challenge, and within weeks we were able to procure the needed material and provide it to our partners."

Throughout our internal PCUz discussions on what our role should be in fighting the transnational threats related to COVID-19, we considered that the safety of people and their health are part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. This approach has been reflected in how the PCUz has responded to the COVID-19 crisis, and we are still finding new ways to assist the government of Uzbekistan through adjusting our programmatic work to this new reality."

Ambassador John MacGregor  
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

## A NEW TOOLKIT TO COUNTER THE COVID-19 INFODEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new need for scientific information and understanding of the novel coronavirus. At the same time, there has been an increase in false stories on social media and in the traditional media – an alarming trend that has damaging effects on public health efforts. Journalists are at the forefront of the fight against misinformation, but time pressures and limited resources can hamper their ability to sift through and fact-check the overabundance of information about the pandemic. To support Uzbekistan's media professionals in their fight against the infodemic, the PCUz launched a toolkit that provides journalists and bloggers in Uzbekistan with timely and accurate information from trusted sources. It also includes a "Debunkers Database" that enables media professionals to share exposed fake news. The toolkit was developed in co-operation with the Public Fund for the Support and Development of National Mass Media and the Radio Nederland Training Centre and is available in Uzbek, Russian and English.

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FOOD BLOGGING

A pandemic-related lockdown during spring 2020 had a serious effect on vulnerable people in Uzbekistan. Taking the edge off the effects of the pandemic was therefore a priority for the PCUz, which adjusted its activities to help



A new toolkit launched by the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan helps countering the COVID-19 infodemic. (Ruth Burrows/United Nations COVID-19 Response Creative Content Hub)

socially and economically vulnerable people achieve and maintain financial independence through the promotion of start-ups and the creation of tailored digital tools.

Gulfiya is one of 80 beneficiaries who took part in one of the PCUz's activities. She attended training on how to run an online culinary business. "For me, a single mother with a disabled child, this programme provided a unique opportunity to generate income while staying at home", she said. The programme, which pioneered an online culinary market named Coozin, also helped Gulbakhor to become a culinary entrepreneur. "The training was an unprecedented possibility for me. I know now what to do and how to run a business. It gave me confidence and the impetus to start a culinary enterprise that will definitely contribute to the financial stability of my family", she noted.

### A LINE OF HELP AMID THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The lockdown period proved to be a time of severe financial, psychological and interpersonal challenges for many families across the world, exacerbating existing conflicts and revealing new problems. During the year, hundreds of women all over Uzbekistan had to face quarantine restrictions while dealing with housing issues, job losses and domestic violence. Taking into consideration the fact that they had no, or only limited, opportunities to move around their places of residence, citizens required alternative sources of assistance to manage the issues they had to deal with. For many survivors of violence, for example, the journey to safety and healing could start with a simple phone call to one of the specialized domestic violence hotlines. Together with the NGO Civic Initiatives Support Centre (CISC), the PCUz set up a hotline to provide information about resources and services available in the country, as well as access to free legal and psychological counselling for women. "In response to the explosive growth in domestic violence cases during the pandemic, the quickest, most effective and safest way to help victims is through a hotline assistance mechanism", noted Dilovar Kabulova, Director of the CISC. "Starting 1 May 2020, the working schedule of our hotline was intense: during the first three months of operations, the hotline performed its functions almost on a round-the-clock basis with only five hours of break daily", she said. To date, hotline operators have arranged more than 150 legal consultations and 230 psychological consultations and processed 173 miscellaneous requests.



An confectionery master class for women, Tashkent, 17 December 2020. (Coozin)



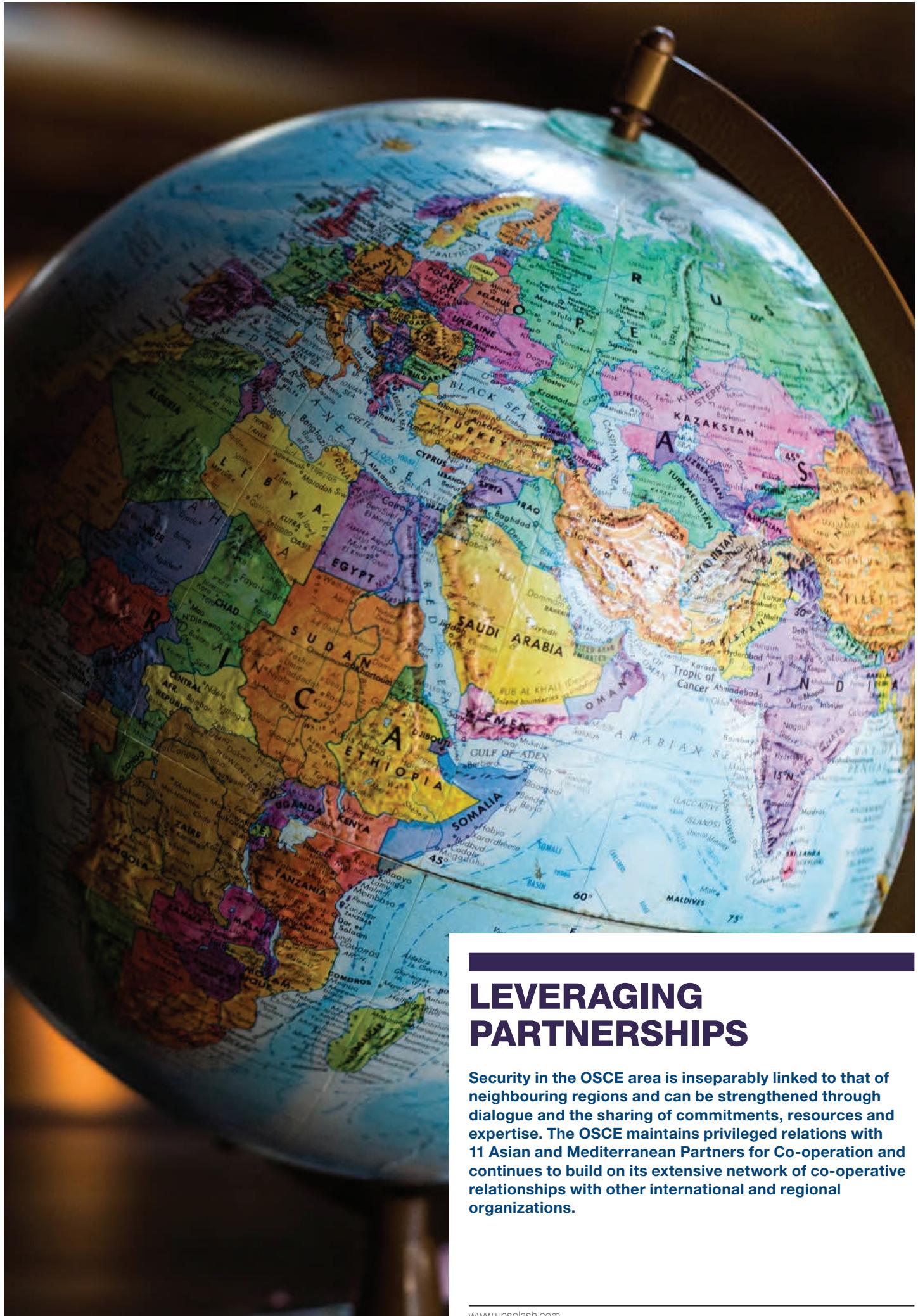
An operator of the PCUz-supported hotline for victims of domestic violence, Tashkent, 25 November 2020. (OSCE/Malika Urinboeva)

### FIRST MODEL OSCE ORGANIZED IN UZBEKISTAN

A Model OSCE, the first of its kind in Uzbekistan, was co-organized by the PCUz and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) in Tashkent. Twenty-five graduates and current students from UWED participated in the online event, which was held from 2 to 4 September 2020.

The participants enhanced their knowledge of OSCE structures, learned about the PCUz's work and developed their negotiation skills and their skills for drafting international documents. Saodat Radjapova, a graduate of the International Economics Relations department at UWED, shared her views on the event: "The Model OSCE enabled us to upgrade our negotiation skills. During the Model, despite the fact that it was organized online due to the pandemic, we could immerse ourselves in the atmosphere of diplomatic relations. I would also like to note that solving crisis issues in order to reach a positive outcome is in practice not as simple as it might seem when you look at it from the screen of your television or smartphone. This opportunity was truly eye-opening."





## LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

Security in the OSCE area is inseparably linked to that of neighbouring regions and can be strengthened through dialogue and the sharing of commitments, resources and expertise. The OSCE maintains privileged relations with 11 Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and continues to build on its extensive network of co-operative relationships with other international and regional organizations.

# Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

## ASIAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION – TECHNOLOGIES FOR COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY

The use of innovation and technologies to confront complex security challenges was the theme of two major events held in the context of the OSCE Asian Partnership in 2020.

The fourth interregional conference on the impact of emerging technologies on international security and terrorism was held on 14 October 2020 with a focus on new technologies and their impact on international security and terrorism while safeguarding human rights. The virtual event, which was co-organized by the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Republic of Korea, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE External Co-operation Section, enabled an expert discussion on the development and testing of weapons based on emerging technologies, precautions needed to minimize risks to civilians and compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law.

On 9 and 10 November 2020, the OSCE Secretariat and the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, supported by Slovakia in its capacity as Chair of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group, jointly organized a round-table discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on border agencies' operations. Experts representing each of the OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation discussed challenges related to the misuse of technology for terrorist purposes and other transnational crimes. Representatives from international and regional organizations and government agencies also presented ideas for the innovative use of emerging technologies, which included biometrics, advance passenger information (API) and passenger name records (PNR) systems to help address the cross-border movement of potential foreign terrorist fighters and criminals, as well as the protection of human rights when applying these technologies.

## MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION - JOINT RESPONSES TO TRANSNATIONAL THREATS

Transnational organized crime is one of the most serious threats to security and stability across the OSCE and Mediterranean regions. The rapid adaptability of organized crime groups and in particular their exploitation of the global coronavirus pandemic have added to the urgency of multilayered strategic co-operation. Jointly fighting organized crime through strategic partnerships among law enforcement agencies, national institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector was therefore the focus of an OSCE conference held in Vienna and online on 5 October 2020. More than 250 participants from OSCE participating States, the OSCE's Partners for Co-operation

The OSCE continued its political dialogue and practical work with its five Asian and six Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. One of the focus areas of their co-operation in 2020 was their common response to transnational threats in the context of the current COVID-19-related global health crisis. Thematic discussions included combating human trafficking; fighting corruption; countering organized crime; promoting women, peace and security; and also embracing the opportunities provided by new technologies to tackle transnational threats.



The fourth inter-regional conference on the Impact of Emerging Technologies on International Security and Terrorism was held in blended format, 14 October 2020. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea)

“The possible abuse of and excessive competition for dual-use technologies among states can lead to an arms race and cause geopolitical instability. The development of technologies raises concerns of new ethical and legal standards, as seen in the discussion on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically heightened the urgency and importance of discussions on emerging technologies. There are rising concerns about widespread misinformation relevant to the pandemic and cyberattacks on hospitals and laboratories.”

Ambassador for International Security Affairs Bae Jongin  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OSCE ASIAN PARTNERSHIP FOR CO-OPERATION

The year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the OSCE Asian Partnership, on the occasion of which a publication was produced that provides an in-depth overview of the co-operation between the OSCE and its Asian Partners. It includes relevant historical documents and details of current and past projects and also of activities implemented in the context of the OSCE



Asian Partnership. The publication serves as a reference document for policymakers, officials and practitioners dealing with security co-operation between the OSCE region and the Asian Partners.

and experts from academia, civil society, the UN and other international and regional organizations discussed the main trends and challenges in the fight against organized crime and presented concrete examples of responses they have developed.

There was also a discussion about what more the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners could do to counter organized crime and illicit finance, such as improving financial crime investigations and the recovery of criminal assets.

The conference's final session explored the link between organized crime and cyber-enabled crime. The participants examined the extent to which organized crime groups use cyberspace to commit crimes such as fraud and the trafficking of illicit drugs or weapons on the dark web.

The outcomes of the discussions will help the Transnational Threats Department identify the main and common challenges in combating organized crime and outline possible joint initiatives with OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.



Besfort Lamallari, Deputy Minister of Interior of the Republic of Albania, opens the OSCE Chairmanship conference "Addressing Organized Crime through Strategic Partnerships", Vienna, 5 October 2020. (OSCE/Micky Krööll)

"It is important that we enhance the capabilities along the entire criminal justice chain, increase collaboration with financial institutions and anti-corruption bodies, strengthen international co-operation and make full use of available international legal instruments."

**Ambassador Alena Kupchyna**  
OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats

## PROMOTING AVIATION SECURITY

Advance passenger information systems and passenger name records are used by government authorities to regulate the exit, entry and transit of air passengers. When checked against law enforcement watch lists, API and PNR data can significantly enhance aviation security.

In December 2020, the Transnational Threats Department hosted a focused online workshop for Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation regarding steps towards the implementation of API/PNR systems. Following requests for co-operation from the region, some 30 participants representing border guards, customs services, national security services and police from the six Partners attended the event. In a workshop that lasted two and a half days, participants enhanced their knowledge of the implementation of API/PNR systems, including in the areas of legislation, technology, finances, public-private partnerships, information-sharing negotiations and law enforcement partnerships.



(www.pexels.com)

# Co-operation with international and regional organizations

Due to the restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the OSCE's working relations with other organizations shifted from their traditional face-to-face form to online consultations and co-operation. Building on its well-established communication channels and co-operation, the OSCE maintained its collaboration with a broad range of regional and international organizations active in the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions of security.

## MOVING POLITICAL DIALOGUE ONLINE

Regular consultations between international organizations at the political and working levels are an important part of their co-operation arrangements: they serve to exchange information and share good practices, and help to create synergies and avoid duplication of their activities. Since in-person meetings could not be held during most of 2020, interaction between the OSCE and other regional and international organizations took place virtually. The OSCE and the UN, for example, used online formats to maintain their co-operation on several issues of mutual interest, including conflict prevention and resolution; women, peace and security; and youth, peace and security. Represented by the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat, Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä, the OSCE took part in the UN Secretary-General's interactive dialogue with heads of regional and other organizations, dedicated to the multilateral response to COVID-19. This event provided an opportunity to highlight the OSCE's efforts to implement its mandates amid the pandemic and to support its participating States in addressing the implications of COVID-19.

For the first time, a meeting of the Council of Europe–OSCE Co-ordination Group was held online in May 2020. Established in 2004, the Co-ordination Group reviews the co-operation between the two organizations in agreed priority areas. The meeting in 2020 was dedicated to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Similarly, exchanges with the EU were held via video teleconference (VTC). In a VTC held on 15 May 2020, the Secretaries General and Directors of the OSCE and the EU External Action Service exchanged information on the COVID-19 crisis and the status of EU-funded and OSCE-implemented projects, and they spoke about ongoing conflicts in the OSCE region, climate change and the climate–security nexus.

With NATO, the OSCE held VTC meetings on topics such as countering terrorism; cyber/ICT security; medical evacuation; women, peace and security; and their respective Mediterranean partnerships. The two organizations also held an online meeting on 20 October

2020 that brought together OSCE representatives and the NATO 2030 Advisory Group to discuss challenges in a changing security environment and to assess OSCE–NATO co-operation.

OSCE events held online and in blended formats saw a significant increase in participation by representatives of other organizations, including at high political levels. The 2020 Annual Security Review Conference, for example, was attended by Sergey Lebedev, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

### OSCE AND UNOCT: PASSENGER DATA EXCHANGE

On 29 and 30 October 2020, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the UNOCT held the fourth “OSCE-wide Seminar on Passenger Data Exchange” – this time in an online format. Some 300 passenger data experts from participating States, countries representing the Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, international organizations and the private sector took part in the webinar.



The OSCE and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism co-operate in supporting states to responsibly use passenger data to prevent the return of foreign terrorist fighters. (Pexels/Andrea Piacquadio)

## THE 2020–2022 OSCE–UNODC JOINT ACTION PLAN

In July 2020, the then-OSCE Secretary General, Thomas Greminger, and the Executive Director of the UNODC, Ghada Fathi Waly, signed a plan of joint action for the period 2020–2022. It is the fifth edition of the action plan, which formalized collaboration between the OSCE Secretariat and the UNODC in 2011.

The 2020–2022 OSCE–UNODC Joint Action Plan reflects the two organizations' contributions to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and foresees greater co-ordination and the implementation of joint programmes and activities. This includes co-ordination and co-operation through the exchange of best practices, the organization of joint workshops, joint technical assistance and the sharing of resources in nine subject areas, including combating transnational organized crime and corruption, preventing and countering violent extremism leading to terrorism, combating trafficking in human beings, combating illicit drugs and cybercrime, promoting security sector governance and reform, and implementing border security and management. The action plan also envisages joint actions in advancing gender equality, crime prevention and youth engagement.



Then-OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger and Executive Director of the UNODC Ghada Fathi Waly sign the 2020–2022 Joint Action Plan at the UNODC headquarters in Vienna, 17 July 2020. (OSCE)

The purpose of the event was to support states in implementing UNSCR 2396. The Resolution was developed to prevent the return of foreign terrorist fighters by mandating that states adopt and use both API and PNR data systems to check against national and international watch lists of known and suspected terrorists. Against the background of the coronavirus pandemic, however, the seminar's participants also discussed how passenger data could be used to identify and contact travellers who were exposed to the disease while travelling and how it could help the authorities in their efforts to address challenges posed by COVID-19 while upholding human rights.

The current co-operation between the OSCE and the UNOCT in preventing and countering terrorism is based on an action plan for 2019–2021 signed in September 2019.

### OSCE AND UNECE: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE ESPOO CONVENTION

Environmental challenges do not stop at state borders, and issues such as air and land pollution, oil spills and radiation must be tackled at an international level. The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in

a Transboundary Context was developed to enhance international co-operation on environmental matters and thus to help avoid tensions that might lead to conflict. It is often referred to as the Espoo Convention, after the place in Finland where it was adopted in 1991. States that choose to adhere to the Convention commit to notify and consult one another on all major projects

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context



Cover page of a UNECE-OSCE-published booklet explaining the spirit and role of the Espoo Convention. (UNECE/OSCE)

under consideration on their territory that are likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment across boundaries. The Convention stipulates that states carry out environmental impact assessments of certain activities at an early stage of planning to ensure that environmental implications are taken into account. These assessments inform decision-making and help to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on the environment. In addition, countries whose environment might be affected by an activity have a say in shaping or amending the activity.

The Espoo Convention also explicitly empowers citizens to exercise their rights to access information and to take part in environmental decision-making. The OSCE and the UNECE therefore collaborated to publish an illustrated booklet about the functioning and benefits of the Convention. Published on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of its adoption, the illustrations inform the public about the spirit of the Espoo Convention and its role in protecting the environment and promoting international co-operation.

#### **OSCE AND UNHCR: POOLING EXPERTISE TO COUNTER HATE SPEECH**

Anti-refugee and -migration rhetoric is typically grounded in misguided and hateful narratives, which assault the dignity and safety of those they attack and

complicate public debates about workable solutions. Both the OSCE and the UNHCR are resolutely committed to combating any type of hate speech, including that targeting people on the move. Rational argumentation and hard data are often not enough to neutralize hateful assumptions, and changing migration narratives require work with narrative shapers to appeal to the audience's emotions, and not least, to create a non-discriminatory environment.

To identify ways to address the magnitude of hate speech and its underlying causes together, the OSCE and the UNHCR held a webinar on 3 July 2020 called "Combating hate speech and toxic narratives about migrants and refugees". More than 40 OSCE and UNHCR staff working in the fields of media, public information and external relations met online to exchange their experiences with educational approaches and tools that can undermine hate-mongering narratives without silencing vulnerable groups and disrupting reporting on the issue. Coming from different backgrounds and working under different mandates, the participants shared information about their projects and campaigns. They also presented a multitude of guidance documents, survey findings, analyses and assessment and training tools.

The two organizations will continue to join forces on this important topic and analyse where they can consolidate their messages and advocacy efforts.



Young Syrian refugees in Lebanon. One third of the refugees and migrants who reach Europe are children. (UNHCR)

## **UPGRADING THE OSCE-UNHCR PARTNERSHIP: A NEW ADDENDUM TO THE 1998 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Co-operation between the OSCE and the UNHCR goes back to 1998, when the OSCE Secretary General, Giancarlo Aragona, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, signed the first memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two organizations. Since then, the OSCE and the UNHCR have worked together to address forced displacement and related issues throughout the conflict cycle. On 4 March 2020, the then-OSCE Secretary General, Thomas Greminger, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, signed an addendum to the first MoU. The new agreement reinforces the co-operation between the two organizations to better protect persons of concern to the UNHCR in the OSCE's three dimensions of security, including the human rights of people on the move, the fight against trafficking in human beings and border security and management.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi (l) and then-OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger signing an addendum to the OSCE-UNHCR MoU, Geneva, 4 March 2020. (UNHCR)

# ANNEXES

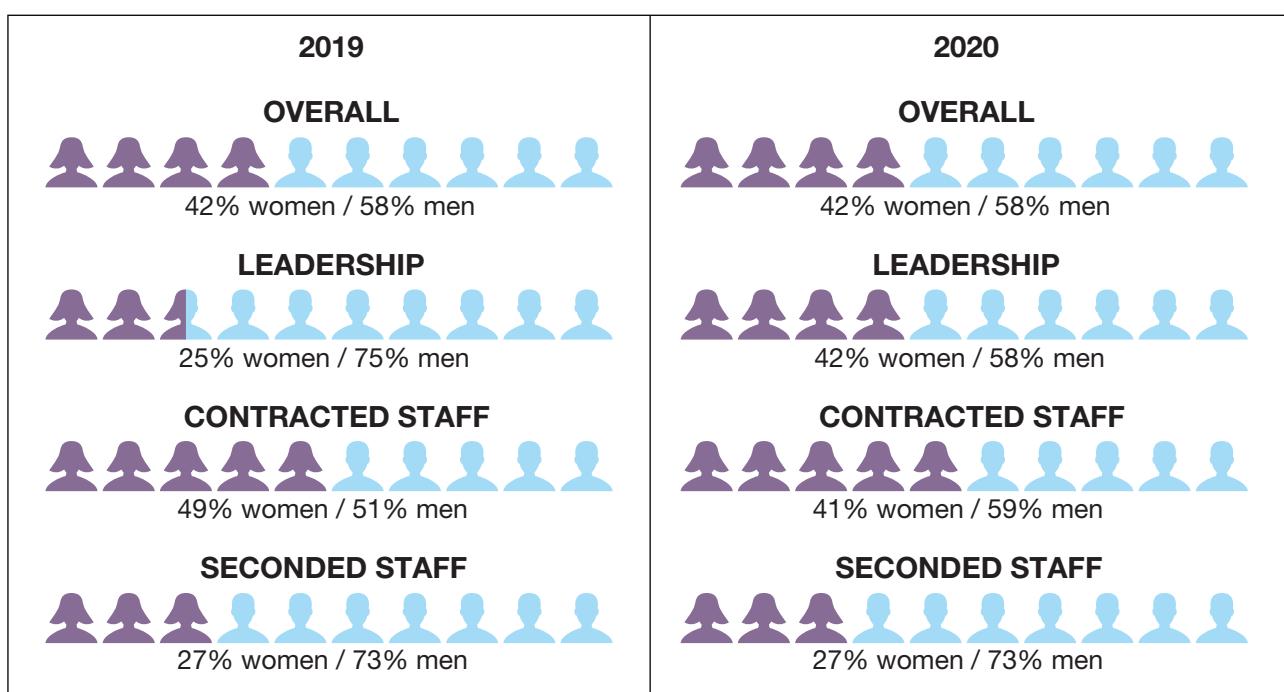
## List of abbreviations

<b>AI</b> – Artificial Intelligence	<b>OSCE</b> – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>AIAM</b> – Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting	<b>PA</b> – Parliamentary Assembly
<b>API</b> – Advance Passenger Information	<b>PC</b> – Permanent Council
<b>BMSC</b> – Border Management Staff College	<b>P/CVERLT</b> – Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism
<b>CAYN</b> – Central Asian Youth Network	<b>PNR</b> – Passenger Name Record
<b>CBMs</b> – Confidence building measures	<b>PPE</b> – Personal Protective Equipment
<b>CEC</b> – Central Election Commission	<b>RHP</b> – Regional Housing Programme
<b>CoE</b> – Council of Europe	<b>RYCO</b> – Regional Youth Co-operation Office
<b>CPC</b> – Conflict Prevention Centre	<b>SALW</b> – Small arms and light weapons
<b>CSO</b> – Civil Society Organization	<b>SCA</b> – Stockpiles of conventional ammunition
<b>FCSCE</b> – Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe	<b>SDG</b> – Sustainable Development Goal
<b>CSBMs</b> – Confidence-and security-building measures	<b>SMM</b> – Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine
<b>EU</b> – European Union	<b>SSG/R</b> – Security sector governance and reform
<b>FATF</b> – Financial Action Task Force on money laundering	<b>TCG</b> – Trilateral Contact Group
<b>FSC</b> – Forum for Security Co-operation	<b>TNTD</b> – Transnational Threats Department
<b>GID</b> – Geneva International Discussions	<b>UAV</b> – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
<b>HCNM</b> – High Commissioner on National Minorities	<b>UN</b> – United Nations
<b>HLPG</b> – High-Level Planning Group	<b>UNDP</b> – United Nations Development Programme
<b>ICT</b> – Information and communication technology	<b>UNECE</b> – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>ICRC</b> – International Committee of the Red Cross	<b>UNHCR</b> – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IPRM</b> – Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism	<b>UNOCHA</b> – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>MC</b> – Ministerial Council	<b>UNOCT</b> – United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
<b>MP</b> – Member of Parliament	<b>UNODC</b> – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>MPS</b> – Mobile Police Station	<b>UNODA</b> – United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
<b>MST</b> – Mediation Support Team	<b>UNSCR</b> – United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>NATO</b> – North Atlantic Treaty Organization	<b>VTC</b> – Video Teleconference
<b>NGO</b> – Non-governmental organization	<b>WHO</b> – World Health Organization
<b>OCEEA</b> – Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities	<b>WPS</b> – Women, Peace and Security
<b>ODIHR</b> – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	<b>WRC</b> – Women's Resource Centre
<b>OECD</b> – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	

# OSCE staff at a glance

<b>3,591</b> staff members from 51 countries	<b>271</b> international contracted staff
<b>1,158</b> international seconded staff	<b>2,162</b> locally recruited staff
working in <b>20</b> locations in the OSCE area	

## PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER PARITY



# Staff

## Nationality

	Contracted Seconded	Mission in Kosovo	Contracted Seconded	Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	Contracted Seconded	Mission to Skopje	Contracted Seconded	Mission to Serbia	Contracted Seconded	Mission to Montenegro	Contracted Presence in Albania	Contracted PR CIO Seconded	Minsk Conference	Contracted Seconded	Project Co-ordinator Seconded	Contracted Seconded	Programme Office Seconded in Nur-Sultan	Contracted Seconded	Centre in Ashgabad
Albania	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Germany	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
United States of America	1	4	1	7	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Andorra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Austria	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belarus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	7	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bulgaria	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Canada	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Croatia	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Denmark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Spain	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
United Kingdom	1	3	1	2	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Greece	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Ireland	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	0	12	0	3	0	4	0	3	0	1	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Kazakhstan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Macedonia	0	8	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moldova	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Monaco	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mongolia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montenegro	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Norway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uzbekistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poland	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Russian Federation	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Marino	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holy See	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Serbia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Slovakia	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tajikistan	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turkmenistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ukraine	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	4	65	4	23	3	29	1	17	1	7	1	17	1	5	1	12	2	2	1
<b>Grand Total for Internationally recruited staff</b>	69	27	32	18	8	18	6	13	4	4	4	3							
<b>Locally recruited staff</b>	366	284	113	117	24	73	11	40	95	20	25								
<b>Total number of staff</b>	435	311	145	135	32	91	17	53	99	24	28								

\*Includes FT staff in posts as at 31 December 2020 financed from the unified budget and extrabudgetary contributions.

Statistics of OSCE seconded and contracted fixed-term staff as at 31 December 2020\* (including staff financed from extrabudgetary contributions)

# 2020 OSCE Unified Budget by Executive Structure (PC.DEC/1369)\*

THE SECRETARIAT AND INSTITUTIONS	2020 UNIFIED BUDGET (€)	2020 EXPENDITURE (€)	% OF TOTAL BUDGET
The Secretariat	40,873,800	39,834,569	30%
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	16,394,000	15,810,161	12%
High Commissioner on National Minorities	3,504,000	3,300,789	3%
Representative on Freedom of the Media	1,608,800	1,533,758	1%
<b>TOTAL FOR THE SECRETARIAT AND INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>62,380,600</b>	<b>60,479,275</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>OSCE FIELD OPERATIONS</b>			
<b>South-Eastern Europe</b>			
Mission in Kosovo	17,462,600	17,461,325	13%
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	11,682,000	11,677,253	8%
Mission to Serbia	6,258,600	6,226,516	5%
Presence in Albania	2,981,200	2,943,546	2%
Mission to Skopje	6,506,100	6,318,971	5%
Mission to Montenegro	2,152,100	2,039,518	2%
<b>Total for South-Eastern Europe</b>	<b>47,042,600</b>	<b>46,667,130</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Eastern Europe</b>			
Mission to Moldova	2,302,700	2,255,485	2%
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	3,618,500	3,460,731	3%
Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners	5,500	1,961	0%
<b>Total for Eastern Europe</b>	<b>5,926,700</b>	<b>5,718,177</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Caucasus</b>			
High-Level Planning Group	247,600	180,307	0%
The Minsk Process	911,200	716,955	1%
Personal Representative of the CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the Minsk Conference	1,179,700	1,039,670	1%
<b>Total for Caucasus</b>	<b>2,338,500</b>	<b>1,936,931</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Central Asia</b>			
Programme Office in Nur-Sultan	2,232,700	2,027,827	2%
Centre in Ashgabat	1,661,200	1,655,846	1%
Programme Office in Bishkek	6,811,000	6,754,666	5%
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	2,499,200	2,486,237	2%
Programme Office in Dushanbe	7,311,600	7,148,560	5%
<b>Total for Central Asia</b>	<b>20,515,700</b>	<b>20,073,136</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR OSCE FIELD OPERATIONS</b>	<b>75,823,500</b>	<b>74,395,374</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>138,204,100</b>	<b>134,874,650</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* The Unified budget excludes the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk

\* The 2020 OSCE Unified budget was approved by Permanent Council Decision 1369 (PC.DEC/1369) and excludes the budget transfer for ODIHR of EUR 108,300 (PC.DEC/1385)

# Contributions by participating States

PARTICIPATING STATE	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS 2020 UNIFIED BUDGET (€)	% OF TOTAL
Albania	90,099.55	0.1%
Andorra	90,099.55	0.1%
Armenia	45,486.17	0.0%
Austria	3,186,091.62	2.3%
Azerbaijan	45,486.17	0.0%
Belarus	198,044.44	0.1%
Belgium	4,601,944.09	3.3%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	90,099.55	0.1%
Bulgaria	364,932.37	0.3%
Canada	7,493,119.49	5.4%
Croatia	199,612.11	0.1%
Cyprus	199,017.27	0.1%
Czech Republic	669,683.97	0.5%
Denmark	2,854,634.05	2.1%
Estonia	128,169.63	0.1%
Finland	2,647,862.66	1.9%
France	14,293,047.46	10.3%
Georgia	45,486.17	0.0%
Germany	15,055,384.51	10.9%
Greece	1,156,411.49	0.8%
Holy See	90,099.55	0.1%
Hungary	654,851.79	0.5%
Iceland	183,868.19	0.1%
Ireland	1,068,018.59	0.8%
Italy	14,257,306.75	10.3%
Kazakhstan	261,375.96	0.2%
Kyrgyzstan	45,486.17	0.0%
Latvia	132,105.61	0.1%
Liechtenstein	90,099.55	0.1%
Lithuania	132,105.61	0.1%
Luxembourg	476,376.15	0.3%
Malta	94,035.53	0.1%
Moldova	45,486.17	0.0%
Monaco	90,099.55	0.1%
Mongolia	45,486.17	0.0%
Montenegro	45,486.17	0.0%
Netherlands	5,396,098.73	3.9%
North Macedonia	90,099.55	0.1%
Norway	2,848,927.97	2.1%
Poland	1,629,596.55	1.2%
Portugal	1,023,777.86	0.7%
Romania	451,370.52	0.3%
Russian Federation	5,537,060.00	4.0%
San Marino	90,099.55	0.1%
Serbia	99,022.22	0.1%
Slovak Republic	284,636.00	0.2%
Slovenia	268,030.36	0.2%
Spain	6,661,175.09	4.8%
Sweden	4,597,623.40	3.3%
Switzerland	3,812,687.57	2.8%
Tajikistan	45,486.17	0.0%
Turkey	1,191,190.45	0.9%
Turkmenistan	45,486.17	0.0%
Ukraine	514,702.04	0.4%
United Kingdom	14,291,804.39	10.3%
United States of America	17,861,461.50	12.9%
Uzbekistan	247,555.55	0.2%
<b>Gap in Scales</b>	<b>49,208.53</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>138,204,100.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Extrabudgetary pledges and voluntary contributions

## DONOR

	PLEDGE AMOUNT (€)
Albania	195,000
Andorra	25,000
Austria	114,000
Belgium	300,000
Bulgaria	115,362
Canada	1,993,018
Cyprus	35,000
Czech Republic	226,158
Estonia	20,494
European Union	8,600,253
Finland	711,200
France	465,000
Germany	5,306,186
Hungary	250,000
Ireland	100,000
Italy	565,360
Japan	197,136
Liechtenstein	180,456
Lithuania	35,000
Luxembourg	151,000
Monaco	115,000
Montenegro	8,000
Netherlands	1,777,815
North Macedonia	10,000
Norway	2,103,738
Poland	22,677
Republic of Korea	36,000
Romania	80,000
Slovak Republic	180,000
Slovenia	7,000
Spain	110,000
Sweden	1,413,317
Switzerland	1,678,458
Turkey	50,000
UNICEF	296,300
United Kingdom	2,128,722
United States of America	11,389,752
<b>Grand Total*</b>	<b>40,992,402</b>

\*Voluntary contributions to the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine are included.

## EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE

	PLEDGE AMOUNT (€)
Secretariat	10,101,353
<b>Secretariat Unallocated Funds*</b>	<b>242,651</b>
Office for Democratic Inst. and Human Rights	4,846,876
High Commissioner on National Minorities	200,149
Representative on Freedom of the Media	365,543
Mission in Kosovo	117,860
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	274,894
Mission to Serbia	326,000
Presence in Albania	448,300
Mission to Skopje	10,000
Mission to Moldova	400,000
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	3,881,481
Centre in Ashgabat	291,387
Programme Office in Bishkek	1,021,477
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	183,777
Programme Office in Dushanbe	4,735,247
Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	13,545,408
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>40,992,402</b>

\*Unallocated extrabudgetary contributions are funds provided by donors to the OSCE without allocating contributions to a specific extrabudgetary project at the time of acceptance.

# Extrabudgetary expenditure

## EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE

## ACTUAL EXPENDITURE (€)

Secretariat	6,099,847
Secretariat Unallocated Funds	-
Office for Democratic Inst. and Human Rights	3,197,117
High Commissioner on National Minorities	721,440
Representative on Freedom of the Media	257,623
Mission in Kosovo	267,244
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	838,835
Mission to Serbia	744,572
Presence in Albania	610,876
Mission to Skopje	531,623
Mission to Montenegro	2,268
Mission to Moldova	835,106
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	2,204,136
Programme Office in Nur-Sultan	39,629
Centre in Ashgabat	164,580
Programme Office in Bishkek	600,531
Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan	149,365
Programme Office in Dushanbe	1,520,812
Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	11,636,023
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30,421,628</b>





