



General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Follow-Up on Recommendations in the OSCE PA's Monaco Declaration

Interim Report for the 2013 Winter Meeting

Prepared by the OSCE PA International Secretariat for the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Ms Isabel Santos



Contents

Human Dimension Reform and Civil Society Participation.....	2
Freedom of the Media.....	5
Political Prisoners	7
Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.....	9
Mandates for OSCE Field Operations	11
Parliaments in Central Asia	11
Annex.....	13

Background

The Parliament of the Principality of Monaco hosted the 21st Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 5 to 9 July 2012 under the theme *The OSCE: Region of Change*. It concluded on 9 July with the adoption of the Monaco Declaration, a political document recommending plans of action for governments, parliaments and the OSCE, to address human rights, military transparency and the global economic crisis.

This Interim Report was prepared by the OSCE PA International Secretariat for the Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal). It considers actions taken in the human dimension over the past six months by the OSCE, including Institutions and field presences, and other members of the international community, in relation to the OSCE PA's recommendations in the Monaco Declaration.

A Final Report will be issued in advance of the OSCE PA's 22nd Annual Session, to be held in Istanbul from 29 June to 3 July 2013 under the theme *Helsinki +40*.

Comments may be directed to OSCE PA Editorial Director Nat Parry, nat@oscepa.dk, +45 33 37 80 40.

Human Dimension Reform and Civil Society Participation

I. OSCE PA Recommendations

The Third Committee's recommendation regarding organizational reform "repeats its request to the Permanent Council to organize special meetings with regard to the violation of OSCE commitments in the Human Dimension, to conduct these meetings in a way that is open to the public, the media and the civil society representatives, and to undertake in this way the continuous monitoring of the condition of human rights and democracy in the OSCE region".

Moreover, the OSCE PA "calls on the OSCE to establish, under the aegis of the Chairmanship or other OSCE institutions, including the OSCE PA, a civil society advisory board, comprised of representatives of leading NGOs working on OSCE issues".

II. OSCE Initiatives

Review of Human Dimension Events – Russian Federation

The delegation of the Russian Federation to the OSCE submitted a Non-Paper on reform of the OSCE Human Dimension activities in June 2012,¹ proposing, *inter alia*, the following key elements:

1. Thematic content. Russia suggested devoting "at least half of the events/annual human dimension agenda to review of commitments in the field of social, economic and cultural rights" and to "enhance focus on combating contemporary forms of racism, promotion of the rule of law, the right to privacy, the right to nationality, liberalization of visa regimes within the OSCE area and elaboration of methodology of election observation".
2. Duration and quantity of events. The Russian Federation stressed that the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) "could be held effectively in a more condensed timeframe, with the elaboration of a default standing agenda". They proposed reducing the length of annual Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDMs) to one day and eliminating the practice of holding a human dimension seminar, as well as synchronizing the timetable of discussions with other international fora.
3. Strict observance of consensus and Rules of Procedure.
4. Streamlining NGOs' participation in HD events. "The elaboration of well-defined and transparent rules governing NGOs participation in the OSCE human rights events is one of the ultimate goals of the reform of the OSCE HD activities", noted the Russian Non-Paper. "The practice of holding OSCE events shows that [the] criteria of [the OSCE Rules of Procedure and modalities of the OSCE events and other relevant OSCE documents] have not been met." Therefore, the Russian Federation advocated "a system of accreditation of NGOs at OSCE meetings".

¹ Russian Federation, "On reform of the OSCE Human Dimension Activities", Non-Paper, Permanent Council of the OSCE, 12 June 2012.

Review of Human Dimension Events – Chairmanship

The Chair's Perception Paper on the Review of Human Dimension Events was circulated on 3 August 2012:

1. Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

According to the Perception Paper, the HDIM could benefit from being reduced to seven and a half days. A standing agenda would be based on the existing provision contained in PC Decision 476 with some minor amendments. Each of the four fundamental freedoms would have a dedicated working session. Two issues were renamed: "Promotion of Gender Equality" and "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings". The session on Human Dimension activities was revised to focus more on the role of civil society. Some working session at HDIM could be moderated discussion among a panel of no more than four experts. The Chairmanship would prepare a perception paper which would be circulated in advance to summarize the main findings and recommendation of HDIM and identify the key issues and topics.

2. NGO Participation

The Chair's proposals included that the OSCE/ODIHR make available venues and facilities for civil society meetings in the two and a half days immediately prior to the start of the HDIM and the meetings be organized by civil society organizations themselves. The participating States and NGOs would be invited to indicate at which session they want to speak, in order of preference. The Chair also encouraged greater use of new technologies.

3. Human Dimension Seminar and Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings

The Chair suggested eliminating the Human Dimension Seminar but retaining three SHDMs, which would take place in March, July and September. One would take place in Warsaw while the remaining SHDMs could be located either in Vienna or elsewhere. The selection of topics for the SHDMs remains a prerogative of the CiO, but some flexibility would be allowed with regards to the location and length of SHDMs, providing for SHDMs of between one and a half and three days duration".

On 12 September 2012, the Chair's proposals were discussed and two meetings were held in October.

The participating States agreed to expand the HDIM to eight days by splitting the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (TND) item into two working sessions, reflecting the reality that the current TND session is by far the most oversubscribed in HDIM. The Working Sessions were slightly reordered to achieve a more cohesive flow of work and the opening Plenary Session was adjusted to allow for an open debate. In addition, the number of SHDMs was reduced from three to two, with a maximum duration of two and a half days. Further, the Chairperson-in-Office was formally obliged to consult with the participating States for the selection of the topics for the SHDMs.

On 14 December, the Chairmanship issued a Perception Paper on Priority Issues in the Human Dimension, with particular attention on the following thematic areas: Freedom of

expression, including freedom of the media and Internet freedom, Freedom of assembly and freedom of association, Human Rights Defenders, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, Roma and Sinti, LGBT Persons, Elections and Rule of Law.

Civil Society

During the OSCE PA Annual Session in Monaco, the Civic Solidarity Platform submitted proposals regarding OSCE reform. The document presents recommendations on institutional changes, prevention and response to emergency human rights situations and violent conflicts, OSCE interaction with other international organizations and OSCE engagement with civil society.

On 26 September 2012, the NGO coalition distributed a Discussion Paper on the Irish OSCE Chairmanship's Proposals for Review of Human Dimension Events.

On 5 December 2012, the Civic Solidarity Platform organized the 2012 OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference on the margins of the Dublin Ministerial Council meeting. It developed a set of documents with civil society recommendations. According to the coalition, the main directions of reform of the OSCE's human dimension activities should be:

1. Establishment of a regular annual cycle of human dimension events which should be much more focused on the monitoring of implementation of commitments by participating States and a process of follow-up to discussions at human dimension events aimed at the elaborating practical, forward-looking recommendations and plans of actions addressing the identified problems.
2. "Emergency and crisis response": Develop a set of mechanisms and tools ensuring the OSCE's ability to effectively respond to emergency and crisis situations in the human dimension or prevent such situations from developing.
3. Strengthening the role of autonomous OSCE institutions, including ODIHR, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Special Representative on Human Trafficking, and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and increasing the role of independent experts in both the human dimension meetings and the development of human dimension standards and guidelines.
4. Enhancing the role of civil society in all activities in the human dimension and in interaction with the full range of OSCE institutions.

Regarding the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Civic Solidarity Platform recommend that it should officially establish NGO engagement in its activities, moving from de facto NGO participation as observers at its plenary sessions and meetings of its committees and working groups, and participation in side events to including NGOs as a separate registered category and including NGO participation in its Rules of Procedure.

Moreover, it asks for the establishment of a process of preparing its draft resolutions with input from civil society.²

OSCE PA

Addressing the OSCE Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights' annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on 24 September 2012, President Riccardo Migliori called for a renewed focus on human rights in the organization. Human dimension activities at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna have insignificant media visibility, Migliori lamented, and scarce follow-up.

In order to prioritize the human dimension of the organization, Migliori urged formalizing the role of civil society within the OSCE, as called for in the OSCE PA's Monaco Declaration, by establishing an advisory board comprised of representatives from leading NGOs working on OSCE issues.³

Freedom of the Media

I. OSCE PA Recommendations

In the Monaco Declaration, the OSCE PA "strongly encourages the participating States to support the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in efforts to strengthen and implement relevant OSCE principles and commitments".

II. OSCE Initiatives

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media visits and events

On 20 September 2012, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, paid her first visit to Serbia. She urged the Serbian Government to accelerate reforms to safeguard media freedom and emphasized that the murder cases of three journalists still remain unsolved.⁴

On 20-21 September 2012, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media held the second South East Europe Media Conference in Belgrade. The regional conference "Shaping Policy for the Future", organized with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, brought together some 200 international and regional journalists, media professionals and experts. The participants discussed issues affecting media freedom in South East Europe including

² The Civic Solidarity Platform, "Civil society recommendations to the participants of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin, 6-7 December 2012".

³ OSCE PA, "Press Release - Migliori calls for renewed focus on human rights in the OSCE", <http://www.oscepa.org/parliamentary-diplomacy/presidential-visits/1075-migliori-calls-for-renewed-focus-on-human-rights-in-the-osce>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

⁴ OSCE, "Press release - OSCE media freedom representative visits Serbia, urges government to speed up media reforms", <http://www.osce.org/fom/93891>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

state policies and law, business and corporate interests and fear of violence resulting in self-censorship.⁵

In early October, Mijatović paid a four-day official visit to Moscow, during which she discussed with high-level Russian officials issues such as safety of journalists, Internet freedom, media legislation and ways to enhance co-operation with her office. During her visit Mijatović delivered a keynote speech at a conference on safety of journalists and impunity co-organized by the Russian Union of Journalists, the European Federation of Journalists and the International Federation of Journalists, and met the Head of the Russian Union of Journalists Vsevolod Bodganov. She also delivered a lecture to journalism students at the Higher School of Economics.⁶

Online and traditional media alike must remain free forums for public debate, said Mijatović at the 9th annual South Caucasus Media Conference in Tbilisi on 11 October 2012. Journalists and civil society representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia took part in the conference titled "From traditional to online media: best practices and perspectives". The Governments of Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Switzerland and the United States provided support for the event.⁷

Freedom, professionalism and sustainability of online media in Eastern Europe were the focus of a two-day OSCE training seminar that opened on 23 October 2012 in Chisinau. Organized jointly by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE Mission to Moldova, the event brought together some 30 online media professionals from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.⁸

Mijatović concluded on 1 November 2012 an official visit to Kazakhstan, where she met with high-ranking government officials, civil society and journalists, and stressed the need to safeguard safety of journalists and continue media reform efforts. During her visit, Mijatović called on the authorities to continue the reform of the Criminal and Civil codes to completely decriminalize defamation, as well as to cap disproportionately high damage awards in defamation cases.⁹

On 9 November 2012, she discussed media freedom issues with high-ranking officials and media as part of her official visit to Azerbaijan, during which she also visited journalists in detention.¹⁰

⁵ OSCE, "Press release - OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to hold South East Europe media conference in Belgrade", <http://www.osce.org/fom/93805>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

⁶ OSCE, "Press release - OSCE media freedom representative, in Moscow, discusses co-operation, media freedom", <http://www.osce.org/fom/94896>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

⁷ OSCE, "Press release - Online media must remain free forum for public debate, says OSCE media freedom representative at media conference in Tbilisi", <http://www.osce.org/fom/95167>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

⁸ OSCE, "Press release - OSCE trains journalists from Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine in online media", <http://www.osce.org/fom/96596>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

⁹ OSCE, "Press release - Media reform in Kazakhstan must continue, OSCE media freedom representative says", <http://www.osce.org/fom/96773>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

¹⁰ OSCE, "Press release - OSCE media freedom representative, in Baku, highlights to authorities need for safe media environment, visits journalists in detention", <http://www.osce.org/fom/97063>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media held training courses for journalists, law enforcement officers and government spokespersons in Azerbaijan to promote the safety of reporters and public access to official information in November 2012. Two courses were conducted in co-operation with the Press Council of Azerbaijan and the OSCE Office in Baku, and took place on the invitation and with the financial support of the Government of Azerbaijan. On 10 November, a training seminar on the safety of journalists was attended by some 30 participants. A course on effective interaction between government spokespersons and journalists was held on 12 and 13 November. It brought together 30 participants representing the main bodies of the Government and media with the aim of enhancing professional contacts between them.¹¹

Regular Report of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to the Permanent Council

On 29 November 2012, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media presented her Regular Report to the Permanent Council. She said that despite her call two years ago for participating States to eliminate violence against media and impunity for those who attack journalists, there has been little progress in this regard. She added that in the last two years, criminal defamation charges have been filed against approximately 40 journalists. While an additional four States have decriminalized defamation, it still remains a threat to free journalism across the region, both east and west of Vienna.

Mijatović called on participating States to stop legislating Internet content and to ensure its survival as a forum for free expression. On a positive note, she said that she is encouraged by the number of participating States that have shown a willingness to engage in training and conference opportunities to raise the level of knowledge in media-related areas. She mentioned specifically the training in Moldova for journalists from that country along with Ukraine and Belarus.¹²

Political Prisoners

I. OSCE PA Recommendations

The OSCE PA “emphasizes that there should not be any political prisoners in the OSCE area” and “urges participating States to ensure that the conditions in their detention centers are in conformity with United Nations standards and to allow visits of international prison monitoring missions” in the Chapter III of the Monaco Declaration.

II. International Initiatives

Definition

The definition of a political prisoner has not been clearly defined by the OSCE and remains a matter of debate.

¹¹ OSCE, “Press release - OSCE media freedom office and Azerbaijan Press Council hold training on safety of journalists, access to information”, <http://www.osce.org/fom/97208>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

¹² OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, “Regular Report to the Permanent Council”, 29 November 2012, <http://www.osce.org/pc/97651>.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) however has supported a definition put forward by Rapporteur Christoph Strasser.

On 3 October 2012, PACE adopted a resolution endorsing the following definition of political prisoner:

“A person deprived of his or her personal liberty is to be regarded as a ‘political prisoner:

- a. if the detention has been imposed in violation of one of the fundamental guarantees set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols (ECHR), in particular freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association;
- b. if the detention has been imposed for purely political reasons without connection to any offence;
- c. if, for political motives, the length of the detention or its conditions are clearly out of proportion to the offence the person has been found guilty of or is suspected of;
- d. if, for political motives, he or she is detained in a discriminatory manner as compared to other persons; or,
- e. if the detention is the result of proceedings which were clearly unfair and this appears to be connected with political motives of the authorities.”¹³

Release of prisoners in Belarus

On 27 September 2012, the OSCE PA issued a press release applauding the release of political prisoner Siarhei Kavalenka of the Conservative Christian Party Belarusian Popular Front. “We welcome the news of Kavalenka’s release but remain strongly concerned about the fate of others still serving harsh sentences, like Ales Bialiatski and Zmitser Dashkevich – whose increasingly tough prison conditions are of grave concern”, said Matteo Mecacci (Italy), chair of the OSCE PA’s Third Committee. Representatives of the Holy See in Belarus were granted permission to visit several political prisoners in September. This was the first visit of diplomatic corps in Belarus to prisoners since the December 2010 crackdown and subsequent arrests. Previous requests to visit political prisoners made by the OSCE PA and the diplomatic community in Belarus had been denied.¹⁴

On 11 January 2013, Mecacci participated in a working dinner hosted by the Eastern Europe Studies Centre in Vilnius entitled “Making the Mission Possible: How to Break the Belarus Deadlock.” At the event, Mecacci discussed the situation of political prisoners in Belarus, which he pointed out has been an ongoing concern of the OSCE PA. He reiterated the PA’s call for the release and exoneration of all those detained following the December 2010

¹³ PACE, “Report The definition of political prisoner”, 5 September 2012, <http://www.assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=18995&Language=EN#footnote-1630045>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

¹⁴ OSCE PA, “Press release - OSCE PA welcomes release of political prisoner, concerned about the fate of others still behind bars”, <http://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/1084-osce-pa-welcomes-release-of-political-prisoner-concerned-about-the-fate-of-others-still-behind-bars>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

presidential election and called for “uncompromising dialogue with the authorities” to reverse major democratic setbacks suffered in recent years in Belarus.¹⁵

*Request to visit Yulia Tymoshenko*¹⁶

On 30 October, OSCE PA Vice-President Walburga Habsburg Douglas (MP, Sweden) and OSCE PA human rights committee chair Matteo Mecacci (MP, Italy) were denied access to a previously approved meeting with former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko at a hospital in Kharkiv. Habsburg Douglas had intended to hand-deliver a copy of the preliminary statement from the international election observation mission and to discuss issues related to the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. Ukrainian authorities had helped to facilitate the meeting, which was scheduled for 13:00, but the delegation was informed just before their arrival at the hospital that due to the fact Tymoshenko is on a hunger strike, the meeting could not take place.¹⁷

Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture

I. OSCE PA Recommendations

The OSCE PA “calls on those participating States that have not already done so to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment”.

II. Background

As stated in the general principles of the Protocol, its objective “is to establish a system of regular visits undertaken by independent international and national bodies to places where people are deprived of their liberty, in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. It was adopted on 18 December 2002 at the 57th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations by resolution A/RES/57/199.¹⁸

III. OSCE Participating States Initiatives

On 4 December 2012, Austria ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and two days later, the National Council passed an amendment to the Criminal Code

¹⁵ OSCE PA: News from Copenhagen 461, “Mecacci represents OSCE PA at Belarus event in Vilnius”, 16 January 2103, http://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/news-from-copenhagen/doc_download/1520-news-from-copenhagen-461, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

¹⁶ Tymoshenko has not been officially recognized as a political prisoner by the OSCE.

¹⁷ OSCE PA, “Press release - No food, no visitors -- OSCE PA again denied to visit Tymoshenko in Ukraine”, <http://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/1128-no-food-no-visitors-osce-pa-again-denied-to-visit-tymoshenko-in-ukraine>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

¹⁸ Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cat-one.htm>

incorporating a provision on torture in Article 312a (effective as of 1 January 2013).¹⁹ List of OSCE participating and partner States' statuses regarding the Optional Protocol:²⁰

Participant	Signature, Succession to signature(d)	Accession(a), Succession(d), Ratification
Albania		1 Oct 2003 a
Armenia		14 Sep 2006 a
Australia	19 May 2009	
Austria	25 Sep 2003	4 Dec 2012
Azerbaijan	15 Sep 2005	28 Jan 2009
Belgium	24 Oct 2005	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7 Dec 2007	24 Oct 2008
Bulgaria	22 Sep 2010	1 Jun 2011
Croatia	23 Sep 2003	25 Apr 2005
Cyprus	26 Jul 2004	29 Apr 2009
Czech Republic	13 Sep 2004	10 Jul 2006
Denmark	26 Jun 2003	25 Jun 2004
Estonia	21 Sep 2004	18 Dec 2006
Finland	23 Sep 2003	
France	16 Sep 2005	11 Nov 2008
Georgia		9 Aug 2005 a
Germany	20 Sep 2006	4 Dec 2008
Greece	3 Mar 2011	
Hungary		12 Jan 2012 a
Iceland	24 Sep 2003	
Ireland	2 Oct 2007	
Italy	20 Aug 2003	
Kazakhstan	25 Sep 2007	22 Oct 2008
Kyrgyzstan		29 Dec 2008 a
Liechtenstein	24 Jun 2005	3 Nov 2006
Luxembourg	13 Jan 2005	19 May 2010
Malta	24 Sep 2003	24 Sep 2003
Montenegro	23 Oct 2006 d	6 Mar 2009
Netherlands	3 Jun 2005	28 Sep 2010
Norway	24 Sep 2003	
Poland	5 Apr 2004	14 Sep 2005
Portugal	15 Feb 2006	
Republic of Moldova	16 Sep 2005	24 Jul 2006
Romania	24 Sep 2003	2 Jul 2009
Serbia	25 Sep 2003	26 Sep 2006

¹⁹ United Nations Treaty Collection, http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-9-b&chapter=4&lang=en, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

²⁰ United Nations Treaty Collection, http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-9-b&chapter=4&lang=en, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

Slovenia		23 Jan 2007 a
Spain	13 Apr 2005	4 Apr 2006
Sweden	26 Jun 2003	14 Sep 2005
Switzerland	25 Jun 2004	24 Sep 2009
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1 Sep 2006	13 Feb 2009
Tunisia		29 Jun 2011 a
Turkey	14 Sep 2005	27 Sep 2011
Ukraine	23 Sep 2005	19 Sep 2006
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	26 Jun 2003	10 Dec 2003

(Countries not appearing in this list have not signed, acceded to, and/or ratified the Protocol.)

Mandates for OSCE Field Operations

I. OSCE PA Recommendations

Regarding the OSCE field presences, the Monaco Declaration “urges the OSCE Ministerial Council to adopt full, effective and long-term, at least three-year, mandates for OSCE field missions that include monitoring and reporting activities in all spheres, including the areas of human rights and the Human Dimension”. The OSCE PA also “calls on the Permanent Council to re-open the OSCE field missions in Belarus and Georgia, whose mandates remain relevant today”.

II. OSCE Initiatives

All of the 15 OSCE field presences operational in 2012 have seen their mandates extended for another year.²¹

As of January 2013, the OSCE field missions in Belarus and Georgia have not been re-opened.

Parliaments in Central Asia

I. OSCE PA Recommendations

The Monaco Declaration “calls for closer contacts with parliaments in Central Asia, in particular the multi-party parliament of Kyrgyzstan, including through greater and more consistent engagement with the OSCE field presence in both Bishkek and Osh”.

II. OSCE Initiatives

Contacts with the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan

²¹ OSCE Permanent Council decisions: PC.DEC/1055, PC.DEC/1060, PC.DEC/1059, PC.DEC/1061, PC.DEC/1057, PC.DEC/1058, PC.DEC/1056.

Following the collapse of Kyrgyzstan's coalition government in August, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek (CiB) conducted a roundtable on 7 September in co-operation with the local NGO Parliament of Political Parties to discuss priorities for the incoming political leadership. Participants at the event included members of parliament, representatives from political parties, independent experts, civil society, and the mass media.²²

During a visit to Bishkek, Osh and Tokmok by OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek on 15-18 October, the CiB facilitated meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Parliament, Minister of Education, Deputy Mayor of Osh, as well as representatives of different ethnic communities. On 24 October, the Head and Deputy Head of Centre accompanied the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Adam Kobieracki, during meetings with the Deputy Minister of Interior, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, and Secretary of the Defense Council. The meetings focused on the current socio-political situation in the country explored further possibilities for cooperation between the OSCE and the government of Kyrgyzstan.²³

In November, the CiB organized a study tour of Kyrgyzstani state officials and parliamentarians to Kazakhstan to acquaint them with Kazakhstan's experience in implementing private bailiffs in the execution of sentences and judgments.²⁴

In early December, the CiB supported a study tour of a high-level delegation of parliamentarians, representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Interior and civil society to Northern Ireland. Participants acquainted themselves with the experience of Northern Ireland in planning the implementation of police reform.

The CiB in co-operation with the Anti-Terrorist Centre (ATC) of the State Committee on National Security and a local civil society partner organized a conference in December on the mechanisms regulating terrorism and crimes in cyberspace. Participants included State officials and parliamentarians, as well as experts of the Council of Europe, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, NATO, and the OSCE Transnational Threats Department/Antiterrorism Unit.²⁵

The OSCE Centre in Bishkek is working closely with the OSCE PA International Secretariat in developing the capacity of a parliamentary staff to improve the quality of technical support provided to the Delegation of Kyrgyzstan to the OSCE PA.

Contacts with the Parliament of Tajikistan

Six members of the Norwegian OSCE PA delegation, led by Norway's Head of Delegation Akhtar Chaudhry, visited Tajikistan on 31 August 2012, and were received by the Minister of Interior, Ramazon Rahimov. The visit was organized by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, headed by Ivar Vikki, and included meetings with high-level political leaders of the country. Previously, President Emomali Rakhmon, Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi, and Chairman

²² OSCE Centre in Bishkek Activity Report No. 195 1-30 September 2012, SEC.FR/492/12
12 October 2012

²³ OSCE Centre in Bishkek Activity Report No. 196 1-31 October 2012, SEC.FR/530/12 7 November 2012

²⁴ OSCE Centre in Bishkek Activity Report No. 197 1-30 November 2012, SEC.FR/580/12 6 December 2012

²⁵ OSCE Centre in Bishkek Activity Report No. 198 1-31 December 2012, SEC.FR/619/12
11 January 2013

of the Assembly of Representatives (the Majlisi Namoyandagon) Shukurjon Zuhurov all met with the delegation, discussing issues including democratization and human rights, border security, the fight against terrorism and the drug trade, and women's empowerment.

Meetings were also held with the Tajik OSCE PA delegation and members of the parliamentary Committee on International Affairs, as well as representatives of civil society and non-ruling parties in parliament.²⁶ They agreed to set up Tajik-Norwegian parliamentary friendship groups.²⁷

Annex – Civil Society Recommendations on Reform of the OSCE Human Dimension Mechanisms

In addition to the main directions of reform of OSCE Human Dimension mechanisms presented in this report, please find below a summary of civil society proposals on reform of OSCE Human Dimension mechanisms, addressed to the participants of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin on 6-7 December 2012.²⁸

1) Main directions of reform of the OSCE's human dimension activities

The HD events should become more focused, more attractive, and more effective. A more logical annual cycle of human dimension events should be established, starting early in the year with HDIM and continuing with strong follow-up activities throughout the year. Activities throughout this annual cycle of human dimension events should focus on monitoring of implementation of commitments by participating States, adopting concrete recommendations, decisions and action plans. The role of independent OSCE institutions and independent experts should be strengthened. Civil society participation in human dimension events should be secured and civil society organizations' substantive input increased at all stages of the human dimension events cycle.

2) Changes in timing and order of the human dimension events

HDIM should be moved from autumn to spring, preferably as early as March. The Human Dimension Seminar should be abolished but three Supplementary HDMs should be retained. All three SHDMs should be held after HDIM and their topics should be chosen on the basis

²⁶ OSCE PA, "News from Copenhagen - Norwegian delegation conducts field visit to Tajikistan", Number 444, 5 September 2012.

²⁷ Nargis Hamroboeva, Tajik interior minister receives Norwegian parliamentary delegation, Asia-Plus, 1 September 2012, <http://news.tj/en/news/tajik-interior-minister-receives-norwegian-parliamentary-delegation>, (accessed on 10 January 2013).

²⁸ This summary covers a chapter on reform of OSCE Human Dimension mechanisms from civil society recommendations addressed to the participants of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin on 6-7 December 2012. These recommendations were adopted at OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference, organised by the Civic Solidarity Platform on 5 December 2012. The document contains civil society analysis and recommendations on thematic priorities of the Irish OSCE Chairmanship (freedom of expression and racism and xenophobia), other alarming human dimension issues across the OSCE region, human dimensions issues in Ukraine in light of the country's OSCE Chairmanship, and civil society recommendations on reform of the OSCE human dimension process. In addition, the Parallel Civil Society Conference adopted a separate document, The Dublin Declaration, calling on OSCE to develop work on the issue of security of human rights defenders. Full text of civil society recommendations can be found at <http://civicsolidarity.org/content/civil-society-issues-recommendations-osce-ministerial-council-meeting> and the Dublin Declaration can be found at <http://civicsolidarity.org/content/security-human-rights-defenders-time-osce-act>.

of issues raised at HDIM, taken each from one of the three pillars of the human dimension. A special assessment meeting at the end of each Chairmanship should also be held to assess progress made during the year in addressing the problems identified at HDIM.

3) Standing agenda of HDIM

A standing agenda for HDIM should be established, obviating the need for annual consensus decisions that hold back effective preparation for the meeting. The standing agenda should be based on the existing provision contained in PC Decision 476, with some minor amendments. Each of the fundamental freedoms should be allocated a dedicated working session. An agenda item explicitly focusing on “security of human rights defenders” should be added to the agenda. Items under the third pillar (Democratic Institutions and Rule of Law) should be moved up in the agenda so that they come immediately after fundamental freedoms.

4) A new format of HDIM sessions

HDIM should be focused less on presenting information and recommendations by reading prepared statements and more on discussing these recommendations and how to remove obstacles to their implementation. We suggest that NGOs and governments are asked to submit their information and recommendations as much as four weeks in advance of HDIM to allow for a shift of focus at HDIM. This would ensure better preparation for HDIM sessions. Discussions at HDIM could be prepared and moderated by independent experts. We suggest that those State delegations and NGOs that have submitted papers in advance should have priority in signing up to the speakers' list at each working session.

5) Focus on follow-up to HDIM

A regular review of shortcomings in the implementation of human dimension commitments should be done. We suggest that a reinforced Permanent Council meeting in Vienna be held a few weeks after HDIM specifically devoted to the implementation of human dimension commitments, with the participation of Human Rights Directors and relevant senior officials and heads of OSCE institutions. The Chairmanship should prepare a perceptions paper that would be circulated in advance of the Reinforced PC meeting. The meeting should be devoted to a forward-looking discussion with a view to fostering implementation of human dimension commitments as well as elaborating recommendations necessary to meet new risks and challenges.

6) Developing a more systematic monitoring of implementation of human dimension commitments

We encourage the development of mechanisms for regular monitoring of implementation of human dimension commitments. Action plans adopted as a follow-up to HDIM should be less vague and more specific, identifying countries concerned and encouraging them to voluntarily report. Participating States could be encouraged to voluntarily report on implementation of selected OSCE commitments and present implementation plans. We propose to move in the future towards mandatory reporting by participating States. A country that holds the OSCE Chairmanship should expect closer scrutiny of the way it fulfills its OSCE commitments and should have a particular responsibility to provide a good example to other participating States with regard to respecting these commitments. OSCE should introduce an official review mechanism to assess participating states for a potential Chairmanship role, including evaluating the candidate country's implementation of its OSCE human dimension commitments. Initially this could be done on a voluntary basis, in order to strengthen the international standing of the Chairmanship. The process of reviewing the

implementation of human dimension commitments should include regular special meetings of the Permanent Council and/or the Human Dimension Committee focusing on specific human dimension issues across the OSCE region.

7) Crisis response, emergency and prevention

Wider application of non-consensual mechanisms in response to human rights emergencies and situations of persistent, large-scale human rights abuses or imminent threat of such violations, including application of the Berlin Mechanism in the human dimension field (not only in the first dimension), development of follow-up instruments to the Moscow Mechanism, actions by the Chairmanship in emergency human dimension situations, establishment of an emergency contact point in the OSCE Secretariat and the Taskforce of the Chairmanship.

8) Strengthening the role of autonomous OSCE institutions

The role of autonomous OSCE institutions, including ODIHR, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Special Representative on Human Trafficking, and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, should be strengthened. The role of independent experts, including representatives of academia and civil society, in both the human dimension meetings and the development of human dimension standards and guidelines, should be increased. Expert groups on fundamental human rights comprised of experts from the academia and civil society, modeled after the ODIHR panel of experts on freedom of assembly, should be established at ODIHR or other OSCE institutions. These expert groups could elaborate human dimension standards, guidelines, and recommendations on implementation of existing human dimension commitments. In addition, these expert groups could be mandated to research and draft recommendations or guidelines on new OSCE commitments in response to emerging challenges in the human dimension, such as the issue of protection of human rights defenders.

9) Enhancing Civil Society Input in OSCE Human Dimension Activities

We suggest the following general principles for civil society involvement in the work of OSCE: inclusiveness and non-discrimination (excluding only those who support violence and terrorism); security for NGOs and activists engaged with the OSCE; recognition of the pluralistic and non-hierarchical nature of civil society; involvement of NGOs in all stages of human dimension activities and with all OSCE institutions; equality of NGO and non-NGO experts; and openness and responsiveness by OSCE institutions to civil society's proposals.

10) OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly should officially establish NGO engagement in its activities, moving from de facto NGO participation as observers at its plenary sessions and meetings of its committees and working groups, and participation in side events to including NGOs as a separate registered category and explicitly including NGO participation in its Rules of Procedure. The OSCE PA should establish a process of preparing its draft resolutions with input from civil society.