



CSCE Digest

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Photo: Chadwick R. Gore

lto r, Dr. David Crowe, Dr. Ian Hancock, Mr. James A. Goldston, and Ms. Livia B. Plaks

Commission Holds Hearing On Romani Human Rights

by Erika B. Schlager

On July 21, the Commission convened a hearing on Romani Human Rights in Europe. Commission Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) and Ranking Commissioner Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) presided. Testifying were Dr. David Crowe, Dr. Ian Hancock, Mr. James A. Goldston, and Ms. Livia B. Plaks.

Smith opened the hearing on the situation of this dispersed group, estimated to number between eight and ten million, by noting that the Roma are the fastest growing population in Europe, a people whose situation has worsened since the fall of communism. He gave several examples of the kinds of problems which Roma now face, particularly in post-Communist countries, including mob violence in Romania, the loss of citizenship in the Czech Republic, segregated schooling in Hungary, and racially motivated murders and torture in several countries. Most recently, he stated, a Romani home in Slovakia was reportedly firebombed on July 14.

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The View From Vienna

by Janice Helwig

June and July were extremely busy months for the OSCE Permanent Council (PC), which meets at the Ambassadorial level in Vienna every Thursday. (The PC is the main decision-making body of the OSCE, dealing with the day-to-day business of the organization and its missions; it also is the forum for participating States to raise concerns about implementation of OSCE commitments and share other types of information.)

A major focus of PC attention was the deteriorating situation in Kosovo. Chairman-in-Office Geremek issued a press release in early June condemning the violence, in particular Belgrade's excessive and indiscriminate use of force, which in turn threatens international peace and stability. He urged

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, by law, monitors and encourages progress in implementing the provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives, and one official each from the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce. For more information, please call (202) 225-1901.

Dr. David Crowe, professor of history at Elon College and author of *A History of Gypsies in Eastern Europe and Russia*, was the first to testify. Crowe provided a brief history of the Romani people, describing their migration from India to Europe between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Mistaken in Europe for Egyptians, the Romani people became known as “Gypsies.”

Crowe depicted an earlier period during which Roma were valued for their skills as metalsmiths, gunsmiths, and equine specialists. Over time, however, the Roma suffered increasing injustices: in Wallachia and Moldova, they were enslaved from the fifteenth century until 1864, when they were finally emancipated. In other

parts of Europe, they were often seen as a Turkish fifth column and, from the sixteenth century, Roma were increasingly marginalized and persecuted. Crowe also noted that “it is often forgotten, when we talk of the Holocaust, that one of the three groups singled out for mass murder by the Germans, of those

were the Roma, and if the Thousand-Year Reich had survived and had taken over Europe, the German goal was to wipe every Roma from the face of the earth.”

Dr. Ian Hancock, professor at the University of Texas, head of the U.N. Praesidium of the International Romani Union and the 1997 recipient of the Norwegian Rafto Prize for Human Rights, addressed the most fundamental question: What do Roma want? Hancock stated: “[at] the top of that list is security.” Addressing both the lack of security and the discrimination that Roma face, Hancock asserted, “there is no point in pushing a child to make it through the system, to get an education, if you know that you are not going to be employed anyway at the end of it all.”

Professor Hancock also emphasized the need to improve health care and education for the Roma. More to the point, he asserted, [we] Roma “want to be able to manage our own affairs, and not be helpers of non-Roma

who are managing our affairs.” To be successful, however, all of these efforts must be undertaken in a context which is sensitive to Romani culture and values.

James A. Goldston, Legal Director for the European Roma Rights Center and a former U.S. federal prosecutor who had served on the OSCE mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, began by warning that “the ill treatment of Roma is perhaps the most serious human rights problem in Europe today—and the problem is getting worse.” He pointed out that the human rights violations faced by Roma include racially motivated crimes, violence by state officials (including custodial misconduct by law enforcement officials and police raids), racial discrimination in education, lack of employment, lack of

access to public places, and lack of access to citizenship.

Livia Plaks serves as Executive Director of Project on Ethnic Relations (PER). PER was founded in 1991 in anticipation of the serious inter-ethnic conflicts that were to erupt following the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe

and the former Soviet Union. PER conducts programs of high-level intervention and dialogue and serves as a neutral mediator in several major disputes in the region. It has been actively involved with Romani communities throughout Europe.

Plaks suggested several goals for the Roma people. She urged: working with the Roma leaders to find solutions; forging relationships with all levels of government; and, reducing racism and hate crimes as a priority. She asserted, “We are of the firm conviction that if Roma are driven from their homes by hate crimes, if walls are put around their quarters, if they are stripped of their citizenship, and if swastikas and slogans appear calling for the ‘darker skinned’ members of a nation to be destroyed, then humanitarian programs for improving literacy or increasing employment will have little chance for success.”

The hearing transcript is available from the Commission. *Sarah Mott contributed to this article.* □

“The time for direct and concerted effort is short. The number of young, disenfranchised and disadvantaged Roma is growing. Many of them speak of taking the law into their own hands. If this, indeed, happens, then we may see a serious new wave of inter-ethnic violence in Central and Eastern Europe.”

—Livia Plaks

Rising European Religious Intolerance Focus of Commission Briefings

by Karen Lord

On July 22 and July 30, the Commission held two briefings on the subject of the deterioration of religious liberty in Europe. At the July 22 briefing, the Commission heard testimony from Mr. Willy Fautre, Chairman of the Brussels-based Human Rights Without Frontiers, on the various enquiry commissions on sects and cults in Western Europe and from Mr. James McCabe, Associate General Counsel to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society on the situation in France for Jehovah's Witnesses. On July 30, the Commission heard testimony from Dr. Massimo Introvigne of the Italian-based Center for Studies of New Religions on the sociological explanations for the rising religious intolerance in Europe and Mr. Colby May who discussed Spanish Government discrimination against an evangelical Protestant television station owned by Trinity Broadcasting Network.

Mr. Fautre outlined the state of religious liberty in various Western European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, as well as in the European Union and the Council of Europe. In his testimony, Mr. Fautre noted that a number of cases of intolerance and discrimination can be directly attributable to the French Parliament's 1996 report which listed 172 "cults". Because a number of minority religions have been marginalized and stigmatized, access to public meeting halls has become much more difficult and more expensive than renting these facilities would be for other groups. Another alarming trend is the rescinding of tax-exempt status of smaller religious groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses or the Evangelical Church of Besancon because government officials claim these groups forbid their members to support the government, to vote, to accept blood transfusions for their minor children, and because the Parliamentary report lists them as dangerous cults. A similar situation exists in Belgium where minority religious groups such as the Baha'i and the Seventh Day Adventists are unable to rent public halls because they were listed as "dangerous" in the Belgian Parliament's 1997 report. Finally, Mr. Fautre addressed the German Enquiry Commission's report that was released on June 19. The report was less negative than had been feared yet still presented some cause for concern, such as the recommendation for a new consumer protection law to cover psychological and spiritual counseling and the recommendation to establish a federal center to continue the

study of religious movements and to disseminate government information on various movements. The Socialist Party's report found these recommendations from the report too weak and called for a reexamination of the legal status of groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, whom they feel are undemocratic.

Mr. McCabe testified as to the ongoing discrimination against Jehovah's Witnesses, including the listing of the Witnesses in the 1996 French Parliament's report, continuing with the 1998 ruling by the French Government that rescinds their tax-exempt status. Consequently, all offerings donated to the Witnesses are subject to a special 60 % tax, and the government is claiming back taxes and penalties of over \$50 million. The Witnesses are legally challenging these rulings but in the meantime are feeling the effects of the financial pressure that these threats have created. McCabe also noted the increasingly serious charges planted in the media by French Government officials which appear virtually every week, reporting that Jehovah's Witnesses have a higher rate of suicide and mental health problems than the rest of the population and is a religion that breaks up the family. These types of reports have fueled a climate of intolerance and have led to a number of Witnesses losing their jobs as teachers or day-care specialists. It has also made it more difficult for Jehovah's Witnesses to rent public halls or obtain building permits.

As a sociologist of religion, Dr. Introvigne discussed the rise of the intolerant world view, detailed the practical outgrowth of this world view as seen in the parliamentary commissions and reports, discussed particular cases in France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and Belgium, and offered some suggestions for US policy approaches to religious liberty in Europe. In his suggestions, Dr. Introvigne urged the Commission to consider religious liberty at risk in Germany, France and Belgium, in light of the government-sponsored intolerance seen through the commissions of enquiry and the government distribution of information on minority religious groups in these countries. He also cautioned that language is a powerful instrument and terms like "sect" or "cult" have been used as tools of hate and discrimination. He advocated the term "religious minorities" when discussing religious liberty issues. Finally, Dr. Introvigne noted that

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the laws in Western Europe are sufficient to address any criminal elements that cloak themselves in a religious garb, urging that suspects should be investigated as individuals rather than charges automatically falling on the religious group as a whole.

Washington-based attorney Colby May testified about the discriminatory broadcasting policies in Spain toward Trinity Broadcasting Network, an evangelical Christian television station based in Madrid. After the television station began operations in 1994, Spain passed a new broadcasting law which grandfathered those stations already in operation. While a new 1995 law required stations to obtain licenses, the Spanish Ministry of Development has yet to adopt procedures under which such licenses may be obtained. According to Mr. May, *no* private broadcaster in Spain has a license. In addition, before Trinity's station was charged in 1997 with the offense of operating without a license, the Spanish Government authorized a commercial enterprise to utilize Trinity's broadcast frequency to develop the new high-definition broadcast technology. Coincidentally, shortly after this decision, the Spanish official that issued the authorization left government service to work for the new commercial enterprise. In his testimony, May appealed to the religious liberty commitments found in Sections 16.1 and 16.2 of the Vienna Concluding Document and Section 9.4 of the Copenhagen Concluding Document in raising Trinity Broadcasting Network's case before the Commission. □



that Belgrade allow a mission led by Former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez (currently CiO Geremek's Personal Representative for Serbia and Montenegro) and the return of the OSCE missions of long duration to Kosovo, Sandzak, and Vojvodina. When Geremek addressed the PC in late June, he added that he is concerned that the OSCE has not been able to respond with sufficient force to the Kosovo crisis decided to deploy civilian police monitors to assume the responsibilities of the United Nations Police Support Group. The appointment of Dutch Ambassador Max Van der Stoel as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was extended until the end 1999. The PC recommended new modalities for human dimension implementation review to the Ministerial Council, and using these, agreed on the dates and agenda for this year's Implementation Review Meeting. The meeting will be held in Warsaw from October 26 to November 6. NGOs wishing to participate can register with the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw.

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Freimut Duve discussed his ongoing work with the PC. Mr. Duve visited Slovakia in late May, and told the PC he is particularly concerned about media-related aspects of Slovakia's electoral law in advance of September elections. Mr. Duve urged the Government of Belarus to withdraw proposed amendments on "defamation." Referring to a recent trip to Croatia, he warned that Governmental control of media is hampering development of free expression. He expressed concern over violence directed towards journalists in Turkey, and praised Russia for its handling of the investigation into the murder of an editor in Kalmykia. HCNM Van der Stoel discussed with the PC his recent activities in Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Estonia, and Latvia. Ukraine needs assistance in resettling Tatar returnees. Uzbek Foreign Minister Kamilov expressed concern over Islamic fundamentalism. Kyrgyzstan is setting up a monitoring system to track potential inter-ethnic problems. Both Latvia and Estonia are moving forward to incorporate Van der Stoel's suggestions into their citizenship laws. Heads of OSCE missions from Latvia, Georgia, Chechnya, Moldova, Bosnia, and Skopje updated the PC on their activities.

Several guest speakers also addressed the PC. ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga said that his or-

Resolution Calls for Public Indictment of Milosevic

by Bob Hand

On July 17, the Senate passed S.Con.Res. 105 introduced a few weeks earlier by Commission Chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) which calls for the public indictment of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. The resolution also calls upon the United States to provide information to the Tribunal concerning Milosevic's war crimes; to provide additional financial or personnel resources to aid the Tribunal in prosecuting war criminals from the former Yugoslavia; and, to "promptly review all information relating to President Slobodan Milosevic's possible criminal culpability for conceiving, directing, and sustaining a variety of actions in the former Yugoslavia, including Kosovo..." Introducing the resolution on June 24, Mr. D'Amato warned that Milosevic "...is one of the most evil men of our time. Make no mistake about it... The time has come to gather the evidence and to submit it to the Tribunal, and to see to it that this man is branded as the war criminal that he is instead of us all sitting back silently as innocent lives continue to be taken." Senate Commissioners Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and Spencer Abraham (R-MI) were among the 16 co-sponsors of the resolution that passed only after a paragraph was omitted which stated that the United States should cease dealing with Milosevic once he is indicted.

Commission Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) introduced a companion resolution H.Con.Res. 304 on July 21 along with House Commissioners Steny Hoyer (D-MD), John Edward Porter (R-IL), and five other Representatives. Mr. Smith said, "[T]here is only one person in such a position of power that he could have unleashed such devastation in Yugoslavia—Slobodan Milosevic." He further stated that Milosevic "put thugs into positions of power, ensuring support for his rule and a willingness to engage in the repression and ethnic cleansing." Rep. Hoyer stressed that the United States should pursue a policy of justice; which means that the concentration camp guards and nationalist paramilitaries should be indicted, as well as the "political leaders who sanctioned, encouraged and directed those in the field to commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide." The resolution passed the House on September 14 by a vote of 369 to 1. During the House International Relations Committee hearing on Kosovo on July 23, Clinton Administration witnesses were questioned about over-reliance on Milosevic to implement the Dayton Agreements and achieve other U.S. goals in the region. *Sarah Mott and Kelle McGill assisted on this article.* □

War Crimes Update

by Erika B. Schlager

Kemal Mehinovic, a Bosniac refugee in Salt Lake City, filed a civil suit on August 26, 1998, in a U.S. federal court. The civil suit claims that Nikola Vuckovic, a Bosnian Serb who now lives in Atlanta, committed war crimes in Bosnia in 1992. The suit has been filed under the Alien Tort Claims Act and the Torture Victim Protection Act. □

ODIHR Update

by Erika B. Schlager

On July 24, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) announced that the British Government has seconded Alison Jolly "for a limited duration", in order to work for the ODIHR as Advisor for Gender Mainstreaming and the Human Rights of Women. This follows the appointment in May of Monika Wohlfeld as Focal Point for Gender Issues in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna. □

Noteworthy

"The [draft European Security] Charter will not be worthy of signature if its contents are limited to sterile compromises on vague doctrines likely to be out of date before the ink on them has dried." —Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in an address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, September 3. □

Commission Leadership Calls for Turkish Prime Minister to Ensure Rights of Orthodox Believers in Turkey

by Ron McNamara

A score of Members of Congress joined the Commission Co-Chairmen and Ranking Members in a June 26 letter to Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz expressing concern over a series of incidents directed at the small community of Greek Orthodox believers in Turkey and urging the Government of Turkey to undertake concrete steps to ensure the full protection of the rights of individuals of this minority in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE documents. The letter cited a provision of the 1990 Copenhagen Document in which the OSCE participating States committed themselves “to take appropriate and proportionate measures to protect persons and groups who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, and to protect their property.”

The letter detailed several recent episodes of violence directed against the small Greek Orthodox community. In response to the recent vandalism and desecration of graves at the Greek Orthodox cemetery of Saint Eleftherios,

in the Kurtulus district of Istanbul, the Members observed, “This loathsome act is but the latest in a lengthy list of attacks against Greek Orthodox Christians living in Istanbul and elsewhere in Turkey.” Another incident raised was the theft of icons and other liturgical objects from the Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary in the village of Agridia on the island of Imvros.

A number of events at or near the Ecumenical Patriarchate were also raised, including the discovery of the remains of the custodian of the shrine of St. Therapon, Vasilios Haviaropoulos, shortly after a blaze was extinguished in January. In early December of last year a bomb exploded on the roof of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George the Trophy-Bearer on the compound of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, injuring the Reverend Dea-

con Nektarios. A similar attack occurred in September 1996. A series of attempted bombings and actual attacks took place in 1994.

The letter continued, “Mr. Prime Minister, these and similar disturbing developments underscore the vulnerability of the estimated 4,000 Greek Orthodox citizens of Turkey. While acts of violence such as those described above are particularly troubling, the Greek Orthodox community faces other forms of discrimination and violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Mindful of your 1996 meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch, we urge you to act to address long-standing concerns.”

Citing OSCE provisions covering the training of religious personnel, the Members called upon Yilmaz to undertake the necessary measures to reopen the Patri-

archal Halki School of Theology. The Halki School of Theology, founded in 1844, served as such a training institution until its forcible closure by the state in the early 1970s. “The continued closure of this facility flies in the face of

Turkey’s OSCE commitments,” the Members stressed.

Responding on behalf of the Prime Minister, Turkey’s Ambassador to the United States, Baki Ilkin, said “We certainly deplore any act of desecration, vandalism or violence aimed at Greek Orthodox churches and cemeteries in Turkey, be they some isolated incidents. Turkey is committed to bringing all those responsible for these deplorable incidents to justice, and continues to take the necessary measures and precautions to prevent any future repetitions.”

With respect to the closure of the Halki School of Theology, Ilkin argued that the action was made without differentiation between any religious faiths or groups, and was undertaken in keeping with the Turkish Republic’s secular principles enshrined in the Constitution. □

**“This loathsome act is but the latest in a lengthy list of attacks against Greek Orthodox Christians in living in Istanbul and elsewhere in Turkey.”
—Members of Congress**

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting To Be Held October 26 - November 6

by Orest Deychakiwsky & Erika B. Schlager

The next Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues of the OSCE will be held in Warsaw from October 26 to November 6, 1998. As at previous meetings, the Helsinki Commission will participate actively in the U.S. delegation to the Implementation Review. The Commission report on the 1997 Warsaw Human Dimension Implementation Review Meeting, including speeches of the U.S. delegation, is available from the Commission office and on the Commission's website.

The 1992 Helsinki Document mandates that Human Dimension Implementation Review Meetings be held in Warsaw in every year in which a full-scale review meeting and summit is not held; those review meetings and summits are normally held every other year (in even years since 1992). The OSCE has decided to postpone a summit until 1999, mainly to allow work on a Security Model for the 21st century to develop prior to the next summit. Some observers also argue that there is "summit fatigue" and the OSCE may benefit from holding summits when summit-level discussions are truly warranted, rather than on an artificially set two-year timetable.

Since there will be no full-scale review meeting and summit this year, an implementation meeting on human dimension issues must be held in Warsaw. (In addition, the OSCE will hold a Ministerial-level meeting in December in Oslo.)

In Warsaw, the meeting will be held under a new set of modalities designed to foster the discussion of human dimension issues in the OSCE and improve on modalities followed at previous meetings. The duration of the meeting has been reduced from three to two weeks, hopefully allowing for higher-level attendance from participating States. (The agenda has been abbreviated by shortening discussion of the OSCE internal structures—subjects that have generated little interest at past meetings—while retaining the same amount of time for discussion of substantive human rights concerns.) In contrast to previous meetings, NGOs will be allowed to speak at any time under each new topic. In addition to adopting these changes, agreement has also been reached on a mandate for the Chair-in-Office to convene, each year, three supplemental human dimension meetings of

the Permanent Council in Vienna that will focus on specific topics.

The meeting will review both the implementation of Human Dimension commitments and the procedures and mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing compliance with these commitments. The activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues will be addressed, and heads of OSCE Missions will also participate in the meeting. Subjects that will be covered in the meeting include rule of law, democratic institutions (including elections), citizenship, human rights and fundamental freedoms (including freedom of religion, expression, association; prevention of torture and international humanitarian law), tolerance and non-discrimination, and national minorities. Although some post-communist participating States are improving their respect for human rights, there continue to be serious problem areas or systemic violations in others. In a number of OSCE countries, there are widespread violations of human rights or reversals of the democratization process. Other countries experience problems with implementation of specific commitments such as citizenship, free media, religious liberties, or treatment of Roma.

As in previous implementation meetings held in 1993, 1995 and 1997, NGOs will have the opportunity to make oral contributions in plenary or in the working groups. All plenary and working group sessions will be open to NGOs. In addition, the afternoon of Thursday, October 29 and morning of Thursday, November 5 are reserved for delegations to meet with NGOs. NGOs also have the opportunity to organize special events or meetings on the margins of the formal meeting. Last year, for example, the Project on Ethnic Relations organized a special two-day meeting on Romani human rights issues that was held in connection with the formal discussion of those issues; the International Helsinki Federation also organized a panel of speakers that included Louise Arbour, the Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and heads of national Helsinki committees.

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Austria's Jorg Haider Meets with Commission Staff

by Chadwick R. Gore

Mr. Jorg Haider, leader of Austria's Freedom Party, met with staff of the Commission on July 16 to exchange views on various aspects of Austrian law and human rights issues—particularly concerning religion—as they related to the platform of the Freedom Party.

In regards to his party's views on religion, Mr. Haider expressed concern over the dangers of increasing religious fundamentalism, especially noting the potential for a Muslim fundamentalist movement developing out of the Balkans.

The Austrian law that effectively establishes a state monopoly over television was then discussed. The law relates to religion in that the state would have the power to approve or disapprove of television access for religious organizations. This system of using state standards to determine religious organizations' access to the media has the potential for marginalizing unapproved religions, thus limiting religious freedom. Mr. Haider stated that his party opposed the Austrian law on the grounds that it created a government monopoly and reported that his party fought against the law in Strasbourg in the European Court of Human Rights. However, he did not state that religious freedom was a fundamental tenet of his party platform, nor did he suggest that protecting religious freedom was a primary motivation for his party's opposition to the law.

Commission staff noted that this Austrian law may become the prime example cited by other countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, which are now writing new constitutions. The effect of the Austrian law may lead to the marginalization of various religions by decree, an unintended consequence that may be duplicated in these younger countries.

Asked whether the law would be an issue in next year's elections, Haider felt it unlikely since religion was not much of an issue in Austria as the people are fairly split into the two main groups of Catholics and Protestants. The lack of significance given to this law may be affirmed by the fact that, as Commission staff noted, Franz Cardinal König of Vienna has made no statements concerning the law.

Haider, referencing the situation in Bosnia, also stated that in the post-Tito era, the people in the Bosnian area could no longer live as a multi-cultural society where

various nations of varying religions co-existed as groups increasingly identified and polarized along the lines of religious cleavages. Staff pointed out, however, only one percent of the world's population lives in homogeneous nation-states; hence, multi-cultural societies are the norm. This exchange was significant in that Mr. Haider's "'Austria first' message" (*The Economist*, 11 July 1998) has been a key notion in his party's nationalist platform. His party is against NATO enlargement and seeks to thwart any attempts of neighboring nations to come into NATO. This nationalist message could have implications for marginalized religions not considered distinctly Austrian. Also, his anti-enlargement stance must be monitored with caution as "even [Haider's] fans concede that he changes his ideas too often for comfort".

Mr. Haider then questioned the CSCE staff members regarding human rights. According to Mr. Haider, while the OSCE strives to secure human rights, the United States has not always had a consistent commitment to human rights issues. He cited the United States' recent policy towards China as evidence of a tendency to discount human rights issues when international trade is at stake. Mr. Haider stated that he has seen this dynamic at work in many European countries and not just in the United States. Staff responded that the CSCE only deals with OSCE countries that have signed the Helsinki Final Act.

Haider spoke briefly on human rights problems in Turkey, and seemed to think that the European Union, by "keeping Turkey at arm's length", was not promoting better human rights practices in Turkey. He saw this as a weak point in EU policy. □



Moldovan Bridge Reopens

by E. Wayne Merry

The Dniestr River Bridge at Dubasari, rendered impassable in the short but bloody Moldovan conflict in the spring and summer 1992, was finally reopened to traffic on July 22, exactly six years after a ceasefire ended the violence and ushered in an uneasy peace.

The M-21 highway that crosses the bridge is one of the main thoroughfares from southeastern Europe to Poltava and beyond to the metropolitan centers of Ukraine and Russia. For six years, all vehicular traffic was forced to make a costly detour. The Moldovan Ministry of Transport had repaired all but the last span of the bridge connecting it to the Left Bank of the Dniestr, controlled by the separatist regime in Tiraspol. At the March 20 Odessa Summit, agreement was reached to complete the repair and reopen the bridge by May 1st. While the repairs were made, the bridge was not reopened primarily due to the demand of the Trans-Dniestrian side for guarantees that the bridge would never be used for military purposes. The three mediators in the Trans-Dniestrian dispute, representing Russian President Yeltsin, Ukrainian President Kuchma and the OSCE, issued a joint statement on May 13 lamenting the delay,

and pointing out that reopening the bridge was in the interests of both sides—although for some weeks access to the bridge was blocked by a Russian armored vehicle. While both sides had several times committed themselves not to resort to violence in the settlement of their differences, Moldovan President Lucinschi provided a unilateral guarantee in a July 7 letter to the co-chairmen of the Joint Control Commission, which oversees the Security Zone. Trans-Dniestrian leader Igor Smirnov was not satisfied and continued to demand a formal agreement, as well as a meeting with Lucinschi. Such a meeting took place on July 21, and an agreement was signed by the two leaders to the effect that none of the restored bridges spanning the Dniestr would ever be used for military or unfriendly purposes. The next day, the bridge was reopened to vehicular traffic weighing not more than thirty tons. The OSCE Mission to Moldova, led by Head of Mission John Evans (an American), considers the opening of the bridge to be a small, albeit significant step toward the normalization of the situation in Moldova, and proof of the adage, “Do not equate delay with defeat.” □

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ganization and the OSCE have complementary roles to play in crisis management; humanitarian problems generated by conflict cannot be resolved without political solutions. International Human Rights Ombudsperson for Bosnia, Ambassador Gret Haller, told the PC that her office is focusing on mediation of human rights problems. It is in the process of transferring the office to local control and expects to complete the process in five years. Republika Srpska, however, still has not established its own ombudsman's office.

In addition to the regular PCs, there were two “Reinforced Permanent Councils” on the security model, on July 3 and July 17. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ron Asmus attended the July 17 Reinforced Permanent Council. The meeting was called to take stock of progress towards a Document-Charter, with the idea of adopting it at the next OSCE summit (late 1999). At this point, participating States are discussing what they want the Document-Charter to address; DAS Asmus stressed the importance of practical tools for the OSCE to use in the field to solve real-world, not theoretical, problems.

Further information on Vienna OSCE activities can be obtained at the OSCE website www.osceprag.cz/. Statements of U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE David Johnson and other U.S. officials concerning the OSCE and its activities can be found on the website of the U.S. Mission to the OSCE at www.osce.usia.co.at/. □

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Information regarding NGO participation and public access to the meetings may be obtained by writing to the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 19 Ujazdowskie Av; 00-557 Warsaw, Poland; telephone: 48-22/520-06-00; fax: 48-22/520 06 05; e-mail: office.odihr.osce.waw.pl. This information should soon be available on the OSCE website at www.osceprag.cz. □

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