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## Media advisory

### OSCE Mission to Montenegro supports media briefing on defence reform

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PODGORICA, 28 September 2009 - The head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu, will address journalists tomorrow at a Defence Ministry news conference tomorrow that will inform about the latest developments in Montenegro's defence sector reform.

The briefing is held following conclusions at a conference held in May at which the Defence Ministry said it would endeavour to spark a more active involvement of the public in the defence sector reform through regular media briefings.

Assistant Minister of Defence Drasko Jovanovic will host the briefing, and the other two Assistant Ministers of Defence, Rifet Kosovac and Rajko Novicevic, will answer questions.

**The news conference, in the form of a working breakfast with journalists, will be organized in the Crna Gora Hotel on 30 September 2009, beginning at 10:00 o'clock. Journalist can accredit on site.**

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## Feature

### School magazine in multi-ethnic Montenegro has lessons for adults too

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The bell rings at the "Marshal Tito" elementary school in Ulcinj on Montenegro's southern coast, and the classroom doors burst open, letting out a torrent of children, laughing and running. A group of them stand in front of the classroom I have come to visit, waiting for their teachers to arrive. We enter the classroom, everybody takes their seats and now I can get a better look at them.

About 30 pupils, aged 7-15, sit in front of me. Ulcinj is known as a place where different cultures - Montenegrins, Albanians, Serbs, Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali - and different faiths - Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox - merge, and that is strongly reflected in this class.

But although the pupils come from very different backgrounds, they have one thing in common: they are all members of the school's journalism club, publishing the best of their work in their own magazine *Djecja Planeta (Children's Planet)*.

The club has been run since September 2008 by two Egyptian journalists, Muhamed Ukovic and Biljana Alkovic, who have been trained under an OSCE Mission to Montenegro project to develop Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali leadership potential.

#### No taboos

Biljana, a student of political science, has nothing but praise for the children she works with. "There are no taboos in our discussions," she says. "We encourage the children to speak freely of the problems they face. We conduct interviews and opinion polls, trying to get answers to questions such as observance of children's rights and violence in schools, and we publish the results in the magazine."

The young journalists meet on Mondays after school. They work in groups with their teachers, discussing various topics - ethics, tolerance, discrimination, drug abuse and other problems - and preparing the material for the next issue of *Children's Planet*.

"When I grow up, I would like to be a journalist. I would work hard on observance of human rights and I would criticize all those who breach them," wrote Bahrija Begzic, a 12-year-old girl from the sixth grade in an article for the magazine.

#### Striving for truth

Her friend Zlatica Nakic, also 12, added: "Striving for truth is the purpose of journalism. A journalist has to behave well and be friendly, because journalists are the eyes and the ears of common



Children from the "Marshal Tito" elementary school in Ulcinj, Montenegro, holding the second issue of their magazine *Djecja Planeta (Children's Planet)*, 22 December 2008. (OSCE/Mia Lausevic)

Photo gallery: Young journalists' club

**"From the very beginning these children worked together as one, without any prejudice, with their hearts and minds open."**

Raffaella Zoratti, Democratization Officer at the OSCE Mission to Montenegro

citizens. This profession also requires impartiality and tolerance, which are necessary for good communication and good relations."

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And in an article on friendship, Zlatica's twin sister Tamara wrote: "My best friend is Mersiha. My secret is her secret, my pain is her pain too, she's happy when I'm happy and we share everything. We have different religions, but that only helps us learn about different cultures and understand that different cultures and tradition should bind us, not divide us. Friendship knows no boundaries, nations or skin colour."

The magazine has a print run of 1,500 copies and is distributed free to all pupils at the school. "All the children are excited about it - not just those who work on it, but those who read it too. We started working in September 2008 with some 12 pupils, and now the journalism club has more than 30 members," Biljana says with pride.

#### **Common goal**

"This initiative has proved very valuable, as children from different cultures and religions are very motivated to work together in groups for a common goal - the magazine," says Raffaella Zoratti, Democratization Officer in the OSCE Mission and manager of the project.

"The idea was to create strong new friendships. To my surprise and my great pleasure, from the very beginning these children worked together as one, without any prejudice, with their hearts and minds open. It seems to me that we have plenty to learn from them."

As I leave the school, I have the feeling that these children have given us a difficult and very important task. They have created a *Children's Planet* free from all discrimination, intolerance and injustice - can we adults do the same?

*Written by Mia Lausevic*

9 April 2009

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## Democratization

The Democratization Section of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro contributes to developing and extending democratic governance and accountability of institutions at the central and local levels; promoting a dynamic and active civil society engaged in all levels of government decision-making; and fighting discrimination and intolerance, including protection of national minorities and promotion of equal opportunities. Activities focus on building institutional capacity for the implementation of international standards, as well as the respective national strategic action plans.

### Strengthening democratic governance

The Mission is working to strengthen the capacity of the Montenegrin Assembly, in particular the parliamentary committees, to review legislation and exert effective oversight over the government and other State institutions. It is also working to increase the Assembly's openness towards the public and other interested actors in the legislative process.

The Mission supports local government development by promoting sustainable training and advisory services for municipal assemblies and municipal governments. Through its project supporting Citizen Education and Information Centres (CIEC), it is helping to increase the involvement of residents and other interested actors in the local decision-making processes.

The Mission assists the Montenegrin authorities in successfully co-ordinating policies and actions within the government and between various state institutions to combat human trafficking and smuggling and implementing the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, while balancing the interests of criminal justice system with those of victims.

### Promoting an active civil society

The Mission supports the involvement of civil society actors in decision-making processes at the central and local levels by improving lobbying and advocacy skills. Through its projects, the Mission has also been supporting the public participation of citizens belonging to national minorities through non-governmental organisations.

### Promoting human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination

The Mission promotes tolerance and non-discrimination through civic education, training for educators and continued training of relevant government officials. It also seeks to improve the status of women and promotes gender equality by supporting relevant government structures and supporting the implementation of the national strategy on gender equality.



Jasna Stjovic from the NGO "Women Action" delivers a presentation at the first in a series of events planned as part of a project to promote gender equality in Montenegro's local communities, Becici, 29 September 2007. (OSCE)

## Documents

### Sarajevo Declaration

PDF

With the adoption of a new Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, the Mission will assist state institutions in the implementation of the new legal framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Additional focus is given to the disadvantaged Roma minority, given their special needs.

In supporting the implementation of the national 'road map' within the framework of the January 2005 Sarajevo Declaration on Refugee Returns, the Mission is working to advance regional co-operation and supports the government in finding durable solutions to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

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## Rule of law/Human rights

The Rule of Law and Human Rights Section's key programmes include judicial reform, administration of criminal justice, combating organised crime and corruption, strengthening human rights institutions, prison reform and human rights education.

### Judicial reform

The Mission supports the independence of the judiciary through the implementation of a new system for the selection of judges and prosecutors; adoption and implementation of Codes of Conduct for Judges and Prosecutors; assistance to the Ministry of Justice in drafting a new Criminal Procedure Code in order to transfer investigative powers currently vested in courts to prosecutors; supporting creation and implementation of strategies for the reduction of pending criminal cases; capacity building in order to meet newly adopted international standards.

The Mission co-operates extensively with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in connection with various human dimension activities, in particular judicial reform.

### Administration of criminal justice

With the support of an extra-budgetary donation, the Mission plans to engage in a systematic court monitoring programme in order to assess the practical impact of judicial reforms, identify shortcomings in the administration of criminal justice and make recommendations for improvement, strengthening court monitoring capacities within the civil sector.

### Combating organized crime and corruption

The Mission supports implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan Against Corruption and Organized Crime. It works on strengthening the institutional capacity of the Special Prosecutor for the Suppression of Organized Crime; improving legislation regulating conflict of interest; supporting the Anti-Corruption Initiative Office; and supporting the planned Anti-Corruption Office of the Supreme Court.

### Strengthening human rights institutions

The Mission provides support to the Ombudsman in fulfilling its mandate. Initially, the Mission assisted in the process of drafting the Ombudsman legislation and thereafter in helping the Ombudsman's Office to become operational. It now focuses on improving the Ombudsman's role in providing legislative commentary, and has also delivered continuous professional training to key staff and assisted in regional co-operation initiatives with similar institutions.

The Mission is working closely with the Government of Montenegro and other key parties in supporting



A study visit to the OSCE Mission to Montenegro was conducted by the School for Youth of the Montenegrin Helsinki Committee for Human Rights to raise students' awareness on human rights issues, 12 June 2006. (OSCE/Ana Dautovic)

the creation and functioning of a National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, facilitating negotiations between relevant stakeholders in order to create Montenegro-specific National Preventive Mechanisms in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.

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#### **Prison reform**

The Mission has been closely involved in the creation and functioning of the Montenegrin Prison Service Training Centre, facilitating various training sessions on drug abuse for key staff. The Mission currently supports the prison service in the implementation of recently-enacted criminal and penal legislation, and strengthening the capacity of professional staff by providing support to the Prison Service Training Centre, including a review of the existing training curriculum.

#### **Human rights education**

The Mission is currently undertaking a long term educational programme of human rights targeted at municipal level civil servants, the creation of human rights focal points covering all municipalities in Montenegro, the provision of human rights education to emerging key decision makers, as well as supporting and strengthening the civil sector and academia in delivering human rights education.

The Mission is also co-operating with the ODIHR on the reform of electoral legislation.

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## Law enforcement

The Mission's Law Enforcement Section works closely with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Montenegro and the Police Administration on comprehensive reforms that aim at bringing Montenegrin policing in line with European and international standards and good practices. This partnership is described in a memorandum of understanding signed between the Ministry of Interior and the OSCE, which outlines the co-operation priorities.

### Community policing

The introduction of community policing principles and practices is the most significant factor in improving community safety and affecting long-term change of the police culture. The Mission's activities in this area include facilitating police-citizen forums to build co-operation and trust between citizens, municipal government, civil society and police.

### Police accountability

The Mission assists the Internal Affairs Unit in building their ability to investigate allegations of crime, corruption and inappropriate behaviour among police officers. Effective internal oversight remains crucial in improving police culture and the public's perception of the police service, while helping to promote accountability and transparency within the service itself.

### Organized crime

The Mission plays a crucial role in assisting the Ministry of Interior and Police Administration in developing a sustainable strategy and action plans to fight organized crime. It assists in developing a criminal intelligence system and witness protection programme.

The Mission promotes a regional approach to combating organized crime and helps to strengthen the capacities of the Montenegrin police to collect and process criminal intelligence through surveillance. It also advises on development of an Informants Handling Model and on enhancing police abilities to suppress trafficking in drugs and human beings.

### Border policing

The Mission helps build police capability at borders in Montenegro. The Mission continues to assist the Ministry of Interior in developing action plans to implement integrated border management (IBM) strategies at national and regional levels.

### Crime scene investigation and forensics

The Mission continues to help strengthen the forensic capacity of police in Montenegro, and will play a crucial role in coordinating a new and comprehensive crime scene investigation (CSI) policy. The Mission supports a project that aims to



Surveillance is a vital part of training for Montenegrin police officers at the Police Academy in Danilovgrad, October 2005. (OSCE/Lars Arwidsson)

## Documents

### Report on the OSCE Police Training Centre at the Police Academy in Danilovgrad

English (302 KB)

[View as HTML: English](#)



strengthen the effectiveness of CSI, develop training curricula for CSI officers and creation of quality management systems, which enable a safe management of evidence from the crime scene to the courts.

#### **Police education and development**

The Mission assists the Ministry of Interior in developing and implementing new education and training methodologies and curricula based on modern policing models at the Police Academy in Danilovgrad. They are in line with international human rights standards and guidelines for police ethics and the use of force.

#### **Strategic development**

The Mission supports the development of more effective strategic planning activities and structures in the Ministry of Interior in Montenegro. The Mission also supports enhancement of parliamentary oversight of law enforcement institutions and civil control of the police.

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