



# Information Documents

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Reports from the Council of Europe Field Offices  
and Other Outposts

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# Yerevan

## 1. Political and legislative developments

1. In May, the opposition (Justice Bloc and National Unity) continued boycotting the activities of the National Assembly and organising **rallies** that took place on 4, 12, 14, 20 and 21 May in and outside Yerevan. Allegedly before each rally in Yerevan the roads to the capital city were blocked, and after each rally there were cases of people detained.
2. At the beginning of May the opposition expressed its readiness to start discussions with the authorities on the basis of the latest PACE Resolution n° 1374 on Armenia and the latter has been widely discussed, in the press, at rallies, at round tables.
3. The opposition proposed the following title for the **agenda of political consultations** «Ways of settling the crisis situation which has appeared after the 2003 Presidential elections in Armenia». The authorities suggested the title be redrafted, with the word «crisis» removed. The coalition agreed to continue the political consultations only after redrafting of the agenda's title and invited the opposition to participate in the process of amending the Electoral Code and the fight against corruption. The opposition refused to pursue the negotiations or participate in the aforesaid activities.
4. Throughout the month the coalition and the opposition have been blaming each other for not creating the conditions for political dialogue.
5. According to information from the General Prosecutor's office, several people have been subject to **administrative liability**, including deprivation of liberty in judicial procedure (following a court decision) for small administrative offences. Several persons have been subject to criminal responsibility and some to deprivation of liberty. The opposition also informed that people have been subject to administrative liability (deprivation of liberty and fine) and several people to criminal responsibility, including deprivation of liberty. According to the opposition, at the end of May there were no people detained for administrative offences.
6. One individual was convicted to 18 months of imprisonment for hitting on the head a policeman with an empty plastic bottle during the night of 12/13 April 2004.
7. The opposition has announced that "endless" rallies will be taking place in Armenia until the President resigns.

### *Legislative developments*

8. The National Assembly adopted in final reading the **Law on Mental Health**. Experts from three Directorates General of the CoE have provided their appraisal after the first reading. The experts had criticisms of the draft and now the authorities are to transmit the law, as adopted, to the Secretariat. The latter stands ready to cooperate with the authorities with regards to any improvements needed to bring the law up to Council of Europe standards.

9. According to the press, the Government approved a draft amending the Code on Violations and Administrative Law. According to the information available, the draft amendments do not concern the provisions on administrative detention. This issue is to be followed in June.
10. The **National Commission on Television and Radio (NCTR)** adopted the Procedure on Accrediting Journalists in NCTR, as required by law. The document is based on the Model Procedure for Accrediting Journalists in State Administration Bodies adopted by the Government in March 2004. According to the provisions of the Procedure, at least once every two months the NCTR is to report on its activities and twice a year the NCTR Chairman is to present the activities at a press conference. The document also sets the terms and periods for accreditation of journalists. Visits to NCTR by an accredited media representative, outside scheduled activities, is also to be agreed with the officer responsible for accreditation, appointed by the NCTR Chairman.
11. According to one of the Vice-Speakers of the National Assembly the draft amendments to the **Electoral Code** and to the **Constitution** will be finalised next month – they are to be sent to the Venice Commission for opinion. It is also expected that the Criminal Code will be amended in coming weeks so the provisions on life imprisonment and those related to freedom of expression are revised in accordance with CoE experts' appraisal.
12. The Secretariat of the Venice Commission transmitted to the authorities the draft opinion on the law on conducting gatherings, meetings, rallies and demonstrations. The draft opinion is on the agenda of the plenary meeting of the Venice Commission, end of June.

#### *Media situation*

13. In May a new TV Company “Yerkir” started operating. The owners are mostly Armenians from Diaspora.
14. According to the Presidential press-office, the President has agreed with the request of scientific and cultural activists of Armenia to broadcast the Russian Channel “Culture” in Armenia. According to the opposition press, the channel will be broadcast on the frequency of NTV (Russian channel) which was “switched off” in April, allegedly for technical reasons, after having broadcasted footage of rallies and will allegedly not go back on air.
15. The Chairman of the National Commission of Radio and Television has declared that there were no further free TV channel frequencies that could be attributed.

#### **2. Council of Europe action**

16. The SRSG took part in a round table discussion of the **PACE Resolution 1374 (2004)** organised by Partnership for Open Society (an initiative of 41 organisations and individuals). During the round table different views of the letter and spirit of the Resolution were discussed.
17. The SRSG has been approached by the media for interviews and talk shows, mainly on the latest PACE Resolution on Armenia.

18. On 6 and 7 May (Strasbourg), representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Court of Cassation, judges and staff of the Judicial Training Centre established under the Court of Cassation, participated in a working meeting with CoE experts on the development of the institutions for **judicial training** in Armenia. The participants established a working group for the development of a judicial training system in Armenia with the assistance of the Council of Europe. The SRSG's office had assisted with the preparation of the meeting.
19. On 13 May, an expert and Secretariat members of the Directorate for Cooperation for Local and Regional Democracy (DG I) held a series of meetings in Yerevan with key stakeholders (central and local government, local government associations, donor organisations) within the framework of the Drafting of the National Training Strategy for **Local-Government** in Armenia.
20. This preceded, on 14 May the third Meeting of the Working Group on the National Training Strategy for Local-Government in Armenia organised by the Secretariat of the Directorate for Cooperation for Local and Regional Democracy.

### **3. Other action**

21. The SRSG took part in the presentation of a Project of the Ministry of Justice, to be implemented by an NGO, on medical equipment and medicine supplies for prison hospitals. The meeting was widely attended by international organisations and representatives of the donor community. The Ministry of Justice and the NGO are to provide further information on the project. The office will be following the development of the project.

## Baku

### 1. Political developments

22. President Ilham Aliyev paid an official visit to Brussels 18-19 May during which he met both the President of the European Commission, Mr Romano Prodi and the NATO Secretary General, Mr Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in order to discuss possibilities of including Azerbaijan in the European Neighbourhood Policy initiative and its participation in NATO partnership Programmes.
23. Foreign Minister, Elmar Mammadyarov met his Armenian counterpart in Strasbourg on 13 May, together with the Minsk Group chairmen. No concrete progress in solving the conflict between the two countries was reported but the foreign ministers agreed to meet again in Prague on 21 June. According to Azerbaijani foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov the respective presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia might meet again in autumn, having already met in April in Warsaw.
24. In mid-May President Ilham Aliyev paid a two-day visit to Nakhichevan to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the autonomous republic. Ambassadors and heads of international organisations in Baku were invited on a one-day visit to Nakhichevan to take part in the celebrations and to visit the sites of some recent public investments in Nakhichevan, including a new airport building, a new university library and a new high school.
25. A Presidential Decree issued on 11 May granted the **release of 363 prisoners**. None of these were among the list of the 716 outstanding cases examined by the Council of Europe Secretary General's experts on alleged political prisoners, nor among those the experts have already examined and consider as political prisoners. However, seven of the pardoned prisoners were on the list of alleged political prisoners listed in the PACE report of 12 January 2004 on political prisoners in Azerbaijan. There were no further amnesties in May.
26. The **re-trials** of 11 alleged political prisoners from the list of 716 alleged political prisoners continued in May. The Council of Europe is observing all re-trials. At the same time, the trials of the people arrested after the post-election events 15-16 October have continued. Out of the 127 people tried in court, only the trials of the leaders of opposition parties, which started on 7 May, have not yet finished. At the end of May these trials were still at the stage of preparatory hearings. All the political leaders were presenting separate motions on the publicity of the trial, alleged ill-treatment, release on bail, objection to the bench and prosecutors etc. So far, all motions brought by the defendants and their lawyers have been rejected. Towards the end of May the trial took a new turn when the accused refused to come to the court sessions, protesting against what they considered as "the unfair way the trial was being conducted". The OSCE is observing this trial on a permanent basis. The OSCE and the CoE are regularly exchanging information about the two above trials.
27. On 6 May a presidential decree was issued by which the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted a National Action Plan Against **Trafficking in Human Beings**.

## **2. Council of Europe action**

28. Two PACE rapporteurs visited Azerbaijan in May. Mr Malcolm Bruce, the rapporteur on political prisoners in Europe on 9-10 May and Mr Andres Gross, the PACE Monitoring committee rapporteur on Azerbaijan on 19-20 May. Both held meetings with the authorities, including President Ilham Aliyev, as well as with representatives of civil society and the international community. They also both visited places of detention.
29. The SRSG held a series of bilateral meetings with political parties who enjoy the largest support in Azerbaijan, to learn about their long-term political objectives and approaches to major issues such as the forthcoming local and parliamentary elections. These meetings were held with parties representing both the political majority and opposition.
30. The Directorate General of Legal Affairs, in co-operation with relevant Azerbaijani authorities, organised a seminar 26-27 May in Nakhichevan on the functioning of **notaries**.
31. In co-operation with the Azerbaijani Ministry of Justice, the Directorate General of Human Rights held a seminar 26-27 May, for Judges and Prosecutors, on the **Criminal Justice and the European Convention on Human Rights**.

# Sarajevo

## 1. Political, legislative, judicial developments

32. The **amendments to the Election Law** concerning minority representatives in municipal institutions were adopted by BiH PA House of Peoples on 26 April 2004. However, since these were published in the BiH Official Gazette on 17 May – 2 days after the deadline set for the announcement of the local elections – they cannot be implemented for the forthcoming October 2004 Local Elections. Representatives of Roma organisations and several other minority representatives have sent an open letter to international organisations in BiH, asking them to ensure that the adopted amendments are applied in the local elections. The SRSG is following up on this together with relevant IC representatives.
33. On 20 May, the BiH Council of Ministers (CoM) appointed Almir Džuvo as Director-General of the newly established **Intelligence and Security Agency of BiH** (OSA BiH) and Risto Zarić as his deputy. The OSA BiH is authorised to gather, analyse and disseminate intelligence necessary to protect the security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order in BiH. The Agency will be a civilian institution, under the authority of the Chairman of the BiH CoM, but with the status of an independent administrative organisation. As it will replace existing intelligence agencies in the entities, it will be staffed initially by the current personnel. The OSA BiH is the outcome of the Intelligence Commission established by the High Representative (HR) last summer.
34. On 20 May, several days of mounting tension in Banja Luka ended when the commander of the **RS Special Police**, Dragan Lukač, and his deputy belatedly accepted their effective dismissal by Police Director over the failed operation to catch two indicted war criminals in Višegrad on 18 April. Lukač refused to accept blame for the failure of the Special Police operation to apprehend ICTY indictees Milan and Sredoje Lukić, but which resulted in the fatal shooting of Milan's unarmed brother, Novica Lukić. Lukač claimed that the operation was in fact planned by senior RS Ministry of Interior officials, including the Minister, Zoran Derić. The SDS and PDP insisted that Lukač must obey orders and surrender his command, a position endorsed by both the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) and OHR.
35. On 19 and 21 May the two Houses of the BiH Parliament adopted the **Law on High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council** (HJPC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, establishing a single HJPC, at state level. The law came into force on 1 June, ending the transitional period where three Councils functioned.
36. The CoE was strongly involved in the process of drafting the law and in lobbying the RS NA to authorize the Agreement on transfer of judicial powers from RS to the State of BiH. This is a major step towards unification of institutions and the reforms aimed at the establishment of a professional and independent judicial and prosecutorial system. The first set of members will be appointed by the HR to allow the HJPC to function immediately. New rules of procedure are being drafted for the new HJPC, and CoE will be consulted.



37. On 7 May, at the very last stage of passing the Framework Law on **Higher Education**, just before the second reading of the House of Peoples, the Croat representatives invoked the 'vital national interest' clause, effectively blocking the law. They claim that the rights on the use of their language are jeopardized, that they are threatened with the integration that the University of Mostar west will be closed. During the process, the CoE office attended every parliamentary session and addressed the Constitutional and Legal Commissions, as part of the IC efforts to support Ministry of Civil Affairs in urging the adoption of the law. The World Bank announced that by failing to adopt the higher education law by their deadline, 7 May 2004, BiH lost \$ 12 million for education in BiH, and potentially \$ 34 million in other loans.
38. Following the adoption of the state-level Framework **Primary and Secondary Education law** in June 2003, lower level legislation should have been adopted by all 10 cantons, the Republika Srpska and the Brcko District at the very latest by 24 April 2004. Five cantons still have not adopted acceptable legislation in line with the state-level Framework law for Primary and Secondary Education Legislation. In particular, some provisions especially on language and catchment areas, are unacceptable, as they could promote segregation. Such an asymmetrical situation would be counterproductive to introducing reforms in the whole of BiH and even possibly codify segregation and/or discrimination in a part of BiH.

## **2. Council of Europe Action**

39. 13–15 May, Sarajevo: Visit of the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe to Bosnia and Herzegovina – The **Deputy Secretary General**, Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, participated in the Second Intergovernmental Conference “Making Europe and Central Asia fit for Children” and gave an Overview of key child rights issues in Europe and Central Asia. The DSG also met with representatives of BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and representatives of several women’s NGOs and had discussions on the recurring problems of trafficking of human beings, gender equality and protection of rights of minorities.
40. 5–7 May, Sarajevo: Delegation of the CoE **Development Bank**, led by Vice Governor Krzysztof Ners visited Sarajevo for talks with senior government officials and the BiH Central Bank, as well as to provide a technical training session for civil servants.
41. 7–10 May, Sarajevo: The CoE BiH Office and SRSG were strategic partners in the organisation of the first **European Youth Peace Summit** in Sarajevo, which gathered 550 youth leaders from Europe and served as their preparation for the World Youth Peace Summit to be held in Nairobi in October 2004. The necessity for greater youth participation and more cohesive organisation in efforts to reshape the political life of their countries was emphasized throughout the summit and included in the youth declaration and the resulting action plan.
42. 10–15 May: a delegation of the **European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance** (ECRI) visited BiH within the framework of the cycle of country reports. Members of the ECRI delegation visited Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka where they met with governmental and non-governmental institutions and international organisations based in BiH.

43. 17 May, Sarajevo: the SRSG had a meeting with the delegation of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the preparations for Luxembourg's term of EU Presidency, during which the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was discussed, particularly in terms of BiH fulfillment of the CoE post-accession commitments.
44. 26–27 May: the CoE office organised and chaired an expert meeting on the draft **Law on execution of criminal sanctions**. Senior officials from the State and Entity Ministries of Justice and Health, as well as representatives from OHR and EC attended the meeting.

### **3. Other action**

45. A new commission, chaired by an international, will be created by the Prime Minister with a 6 month mandate to propose a **reform strategy for the police forces** in BiH. The recently completed EC sponsored functional review of the police will serve as a basis for the work of this Commission.

# Tbilisi

## 1. Political developments

46. The conflict between the central government and the Head of the **Adjara** Autonomy ended on 6 May with Aslan Abashidze leaving for Moscow after overnight talks in Batumi with the Secretary of the Russian National Security Council, Igor Ivanov.
47. On 7 May the Secretary General of the Council of Europe expressed satisfaction that the crisis in Adjara had been resolved without bloodshed. In a letter to President Saakashvili, he commended him and his team for reaching a peaceful solution as advocated by him during his visit to Tbilisi and Batumi earlier this year. He also underlined his expectation that Georgia would now be even more ready and willing to work towards fulfilling its commitments to the organization. In this context, the Secretary General referred, in particular, to the establishment of a sound legal framework determining the status of Georgia's autonomous territories.
48. On 6 May the Parliament adopted a decree with 137 votes to 1, according to which the President of Georgia is authorized to cancel the current Parliament and local governance bodies in the Adjara Autonomous Republic.
49. On 7 May, dissenting MPs from the governing party and the opposition proposed to submit a legislative initiative to the Parliament about holding a plebiscite in the Adjarian Autonomous Republic regarding cancellation of the region's autonomous status.
50. On 7 May a 20-member Interim Council was set to run the Adjarian Autonomy before fresh local elections in Adjara. The regional legislative body of Adjara was dissolved on the same day. The Chair of the Council is directly subordinated to the President of Georgia. Leaders of the "Our Adjara" movement, which was a major opposition force against Abashidze's regime, were also included in the Council and thus the movement "Our Adjara" ceased its activities.
51. The Democratic Revival Union party led by ex-Adjarian leader Aslan Abashidze, ceased activity in the wake of Abashidze's departure to Moscow on 6 May.
52. On 11 May a special economic team led by the Economy Minister made a visit to probe the legality of the privatisation process in the region that had taken place during the rule of Abashidze's regime. The issue of revision of the privatisation process "might be put on the agenda."
53. On 13 May the Interim Council of Adjarian Autonomy approved 20 June as a date for holding snap local elections in the region, when Adjarian voters would elect a 30-member Supreme Council – the regional legislative body. The Congress of Local Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will observe the elections
54. On 18 May the Parliament issued a special decree over the launch of public discussion regarding the draft law over the constitutional powers of the Adjara Autonomous Republic, submitted to the Parliament by President Saakashvili.

55. The largest military parade in recent years was held in the Georgian capital Tbilisi on 26 May to mark Independence Day. Around 5,000 soldiers and officers from the best-trained units of the armed forces, up to one hundred armoured vehicles, heavy artillery and missile launchers were on show. The Georgian air forces also participated in the parade. The Batumi-based 25th Brigade of the Georgian Armed Forces, as well as vessels of the Georgian navy, participated in the military parade in Batumi.
56. According to preliminary results, the ruling party, Unity, won most of the seats in the “parliamentary elections” held on 23 May in the breakaway republic of **South Ossetia**.
57. The Georgian Interior Minister announced on 31 May that additional forces of internal troops were dispatched to Shida Kartli region, near the Ossetian conflict zone, after the commander of Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in the conflict zone, demanded the disbanding of Georgia’s checkpoints near the breakaway South Ossetia. Tensions defused as additional units of the Georgian internal troops started pulling out from the South Ossetian conflict zone after five-hour long deployment in the Georgian village of Tkviavi.
58. On 13 May Defence Minister of Georgia’s breakaway **Abkhazia** accused the central (Tbilisi) government of attempted “destabilization” in the Gali district of Abkhazia, which is predominantly populated by ethnic Georgians. On 14 May the Chief of Staff of the Georgian armed forces denied those allegations.
59. Speaking at the Russian-Georgian Business Forum in Tbilisi on 28 May, the Russian Minister for Economic Development and Trade announced that the Russian authorities were ready to strengthen economic ties with Georgia, outlining among the key trends for future cooperation in particular the eradication of obstacles for business cooperation between the two countries. Experts from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Russia will help Georgia to draft a new tax code.
60. The European Commission recommends including Georgia, together with Armenia and Azerbaijan, in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The European Security Strategy, adopted by the European Council in December 2003, identifies the South Caucasus as one of the regions in which the EU should take a "stronger and more active interest".

## **2. Council of Europe action**

61. The Venice Commission, in co-operation with the Constitutional Court of Georgia, held a conference on 18 and 19 May in Tbilisi on “**The constitutional organisation of the State**”. The Conference addressed, in particular, issues of the separation of powers in the light of the recent constitutional amendments in Georgia, as well as territorial organisation following the restoration of Georgian Government authority in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.
62. A Working Group meeting on a draft **broadcasting law** was held on 24 May at the Georgian National Communications Commission Office. The objectives of the

Working Group are to examine the draft law elaborated by the Working Group and the comments on the draft made by CoE experts.

63. On 24 May the SRSG met with the acting Chair of the Central Election Commission on the forthcoming elections in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara on 20 June. The Georgian side invited the CoE to assist in the preparation of the elections, and to observe the election process. The SRSG informed the Ambassadorial Working Group about the CoE contribution to the international efforts in this respect.
64. In May the SRSG visited the Georgian Parliament in connection with CoE assistance to the reform of Parliamentary work.
65. In May the SRSG met with representatives of civil society on human rights and freedom of the media. On 27 May he met with representatives of the Union of Deported Meskhetians.

## Chisinau

### Political Developments:

66. The CDPP faction of the **Parliament** stopped blocking of the plenary tribune. Changes to the Parliamentary Regulation, providing punishment measures for deputies breaching the order (4 warnings, followed by forced expulsion from the room of disturbing deputies, with the interdiction to attend up to 10 plenary sessions), was passed in first reading in Parliament on 6 May. Their second reading was cancelled probably in connection with the visit of the Speaker to Strasbourg.
67. A new **Electoral Bloc “Democratic Moldova”** (BDM) was launched on 11 May by three opposition formations: Party “Moldova Noastra” Alliance” (MNA), Democratic Party (DP) and the Social Liberal Party (SLP). Its leaders declared that their goal was to obtain victory at parliamentary elections in 2005 and offer “a democratic alternative to the current communist ruling”. The block is open for other parties and social-political movements, close to democratic principles and willing to adhere. Leaders of the three formations have also announced their intention to form a single party after the elections. The block’s candidate for President will be Chisinau Mayor Urechean.
68. Urechean made declarations concerning pressure on political opponents, local and foreign businessmen from the President of RM and communist government.
69. Each Sunday **CDPP** leader Rosca organised protest meetings against abuses and totalitarian regime. Meetings take place near Stefan cel Mare’s monument. The party celebrated its VIII Congress in the central square of the city as the authorities refused to offer them a hall. On 26 May the Leader of CDPP called all opposition parties to join their efforts for future elections and to quit all post-electoral alliances with the Communist party, formed after local elections in 2003.
70. Some impediments to the **media** could be seen, such as intimidation of independent journalists, damping of radiobroadcasts, limitation of Antena C and Euro TV broadcasting, and court processes initiated against independent press agencies.
71. President Voronin participated in the Summit of Central and Eastern European leaders in Mamaya, Romania, 26-28 May and met with the Romanian President Ilescu. A need to improve and intensify the bilateral relations was declared. Voronin asked Ilescu to support the establishment of the Moldovan language
72. On several occasions **European integration** was mentioned as the top priority of the country as well as the readiness of many European states to sponsor the implementation of some segments of the Action Plan that Chisinau will sign with the EU.
73. **Transnistria**. A new round on negotiations was started on 25 May in Tiraspol. According to the Russian representative, negotiators are far apart concerning the solution and structure of an eventual federation. Local observers are sceptical regarding further negotiations, fearing that a compromise solution is possible only after Parliamentary elections in Moldova in February 2005.

74. On the problem of Moldovan schools in Transnistria, a joint meeting with the participation of OSCE and CoE took place in Tiraspol on 19 May; the Moldovan part proposed to set up a working group, consisting of 4 members: Transnistria, Moldova, OSCE and CoE, to monitor each Moldovan school and inspect their activity. Next meeting is scheduled for 24 June.

## **2. Council of Europe action**

75. The SRSG met with the Speaker of the Parliament on 6 May, focusing on the **relationship Government/Opposition** in connection with the lifted immunity of 4 parliamentarians and the blockade of plenary sessions of Parliament by CDPP deputies. Other issues approached included relationship Parliament – Council of Europe, procedures for submission of draft laws for expertise to the CoE, changes in the Parliamentary Regulations, main priorities in Parliamentary activity.

76. Secretary General Walter Schwimmer gave an interview to radio “Free Europe” on 5 May on the support of European institutions and the CoE in the settlement of internal issues in Moldova, the role of the European Convention on Human Rights and other documents Moldova is party to and legal assistance from the CoE.

77. On 7 May the SRSG participated in the TV talk-show “Buna Seara” on the freedom of the press in Moldova.

78. On 27 May Secretary General Walter Schwimmer met Serafim Urechean in Strasbourg, during the session of the Congress. He confirmed the Council of Europe’s continuing commitment to democratic reforms in Moldova.

79. On the **Day of Europe**, the SRSG delivered a speech at the opening of the Council of Europe Exhibition, held at the National Library in collaboration with the Information Office. On 9 May, **Victory Day**, the SRSG attended the Ceremony of wreath laying at the Memorial of Heroes and Stefan cel Mare’s monument.

80. On 7 May, the SRSG met with representatives of the OSCE Commissioner on National Minorities, to discuss matters related to the situation of national minorities in Moldova and Moldovan schools in Transnistria, manuals and curricula based on Latin graphics.

81. From 12 to 17 May the SRSG participated in a joint conference CoE and the Department for Youth and Sport “*Global view of the situation of young people in Moldova. Cooperation and Partnership*”. The purpose was to assess youth organisations (state and NGO), structures, policy and trends in Moldova, offering participative models and practice.

82. The SRSG had meetings with the **Mayor of Comrat (Gagauzia)**, C. Tausanji, concerning his illegal dismissal by the Assembly of Gagauzia. Mr Tausanji applied to the Court, local and international institutions which monitor respect for Human Rights in Moldova in order to get back to his post, won in public elections in 2003.

83. **PACE Rapporteurs for Moldova** made a fact-finding visit to Chisinau on 24 - 25 May. They met the Speaker of the Parliament, representatives of the Government, President Voronin, representatives of political parties and NGOs.

84. From 24 to 26 May the SRSG participated in a conference *Securing Moldova's Place in Europe*.



## Belgrade

### 1. Political and legislative developments

85. The Serbia-Montenegro Parliament appointed seven out of the required eight judges to the **State Union's new Court**. The Montenegrin judge Ratko Vukotic, did not receive enough support to be appointed. According to the Constitutional Charter, the Court is competent, *inter alia*, to adjudicate on appeals filed by citizens, if no other legal remedies have been stipulated, in cases where the institutions of SaM have interfered with the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter.
86. Having in mind that the court will soon become fully operational, this could be seen as the first step towards withdrawing a reservation in respect of Article 13 of the ECHR
87. After 14 months of establishing the State Union Parliament, a committee for the control of **state security** services has finally been appointed, with a mandate to monitor security at the level of state union (army and MFA security service). The chair of the committee will be the Radical party MP, Mr Dragan Todorovic.
88. The Serbian Radical Party launched a motion for the dismissal of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Vuk Draskovic, because of his public acknowledgment of ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo during the Milosevic era. At the Parliamentary session held on 27 May, the motion did not get the support of MPs present.
89. The Republican Electoral Commission issued a final list of 15 candidates for the **Presidential elections in Serbia** on 13 June. This is the first election which will be held according to the amendments to the electoral law passed last March, that abolished the 50 per cent voter turnout requirement, eliminating the potential risk of repeat failure. To win in the first round, the new legislative provisions require that a candidate must receive 50 percent plus 1 of all votes cast. If not, the two leading candidates go into a second round two weeks later, in which the candidate who receives the most votes is elected.
90. According to the public polls the three leading candidates (Tadic, Marsicanin and Nikolic) are followed by the businessman Mr Bogoljub Karic, who evidently wants to re-gain the political influence he had before the changes in 2000. Despite the fact that voting is possible for citizens living outside the country, citizens living abroad are showing little interest in the forthcoming elections. Citizens of Kosovo displaced in Montenegro, however, have no possibility to vote.
91. The Serbian Parliament adopted amendments to the **Criminal Proceedings Act**. The amendments provide for the extension of custody from two to four years from the date on which charges are brought until a court rules on the case. The law stipulates the presumption of innocence until a defendant has been found guilty and allows for anyone detained to be immediately informed of his rights, which include medical examination on demand. Broader powers are given to police when investigating crimes which carry a prison sentence of ten years, as compared with five in the previous legislation. The Ministry explained that the amendments aim to bring local legislation into line with international conventions and European standards.

92. At the same session, the Assembly adopted amendments on the Law on the **education system**, diminishing reforms introduced last year and jeopardising the participation of Serbia in European education reform processes, especially the Bologna Process creating a European higher education area by 2010.
93. The alleged mastermind behind the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, **Milorad Ulemek Legija**, surrendered to the Serbian police on 2 May. He was indicted for the assassination as well as in connection with the murder of former Serbian President Ivan Stambolic, and an attempt on the life of the leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement Vuk Draskovic.

## **2. Council of Europe action**

94. A meeting with the Deputy Minister of Justice regarding future co-operation was held on 28 May. The willingness of the MoJ not only to continue but also to enlarge cooperation with the CoE was stressed. For this reason the Ministry proposed the conclusion of a new Memorandum of understanding, which will renew the existing one and define fields and modalities of cooperation, accentuating the CoE role in providing legal opinions.
95. The Serbian Ministry of Justice requested an expert opinion on the draft Law on **juvenile justice**. The Ministry further indicated a rapid finalisation of the work on drafting the Criminal law, which will also be forwarded for expert analysis.
96. The **PACO Impact** regional project was presented in Belgrade on 31 May. On the following day a number of bilateral meetings with various national as well as international counterparts were held. Although at the moment the State has not clarified the nomination of the PACO Country Director, reassurances have been given regarding the involvement at the strategy making level of all relevant ministries and NGOs; IOs will closely monitor the process.
97. Regarding the continuation of the programme “**Police and HR**” in Serbia, the CoE office and DGII organised meetings in Belgrade on 10-12 May with all interlocutors, both national (MIA, NGOs) and international (OSCE, EAR). All details as to the overall framework for future co-operation have been agreed.
98. On the occasion of the Word Day of the Press, UNESCO organised an International conference on **media in conflict zones** and countries in transition, on 3 May in Belgrade. The Conference, in which the CoE took part, was concluded by the adoption of a Belgrade declaration, which emphasised and supported the independence of the media. The CoE also participated in the Regional Conference on Media for South-East Europe, organised by the OSCE, on 4 May. CoE, EC and EAR had also a meeting with the Serbian Ministry of Culture addressing the problem of the broadcasting council.
99. A Conference on **Media concentration** was organised by the CoE, the Serbian Ministry of Culture and the Media Center in Belgrade, on 14 May. The Conference was attended by state officials, journalists and local experts, covering the subjects of legal framework, role of public service broadcasting and anti-concentration measures.

100. The CoE organised training activities regarding **education**: - Seminar on history teaching on 16-18 May in Subotica, and - Teacher Training seminar as part of the Joint Programme of EC and CoE on 27–29 May in Belgrade.
101. A training for judges on the **ECHR, Articles 5 and 6**, was organised by the Judicial Training Center and the Council of Europe, on 24-25 May in Novi Pazar. This was followed by a training seminar for lawyers on the ECHR, organised by the CoE and the Belgrade Center for HR, from 28 May to 1 June in Belgrade.
102. The office participated in a two-day conference organised by the Standing Conference of towns and municipalities of Serbia on - **Decentralisation and minority rights** protection in local community, held in Lepenski Vir on 30 and 31 May.

# Podgorica

## 1. Political and legal developments

103. According to high officials of the DPS, the campaign on a **referendum** for independence will start in autumn.
104. The initiative for the establishment of four regions inhabited by Albanian population evolved into an initiative for the establishment of one region with three sub-regions. It was refused again by the political representatives of the Albanian citizens. The third expert meeting on the Draft-Law on Territorial Organisation will be held in September/October. If the adoption of the Law on Exercise of **Minority Rights** will be delayed, a Study Visit to Strasbourg for selected members of the working group should be organised.
105. The winner in the second round of early **local elections** in the Municipality of Herceg Novi, held on 2 May, was Mr Dejan Mandic, candidate of the coalition SNP-SNS-SRS (parliamentary opposition). Out of the total turn out of 67.91%, 53.54% voted for the new mayor.
106. The first Session of the **State Union Court** was held in Podgorica. Attention needs to be paid to the drafting of its Rules of Procedure and expert assistance should be provided, if requested.
107. A series of demonstrations organised by the united opposition political parties (SNP, LSCG, SNS, NS and DSS) calling for early elections attracted wide public interest. An experts meeting on the parliamentary draft rules of procedure, gathering the majority and opposition political actors, was organised in Podgorica within the CoE/EAR Project "Support for Parliamentary Institutions".
108. The Ministry of Interior and the UNHCR Office in Podgorica signed an Agreement for Registration of **Refugees and IDPs**, starting from 1 June. The drafting of the Laws on Asylum, Foreigners, Citizenship and Personal Identification Documents are in final phase. Expert assistance will be necessary to ensure compliance of the Draft Law on Asylum with the State Union Draft Law on Asylum.
109. The Ministry of Justice of Serbia and Montenegro signed the Protocol for Cooperation, which, *inter alia*, will concern the transfer of competences of military courts to civilian authorities and the regulation for the appointment of the Agent/Co-Agent before the ECEHR. Expert assistance should be provided for the two legal developments.
110. Mr Dusko JOVANOVIC, Editor in Chief of the Daily "DAN" was murdered. There are also pending cases for defamation and insult against printed **media** initiated by public officials. Additional training on Article 10 in co-relation with Articles 6 and 8 of the ECHR is desirable.
111. The Directory of Institutions and Organisations dealing with the problem of **trafficking** in human beings was published. The Web-site of the Office of the National Coordinator for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings was promoted.

The Draft National Action Plan for Fight against Trafficking of Children was finalized. Training of police officers, investigative judges, defence lawyers and NGOs on victim protection should be provided. The adoption of the Law on Programme for Witness Protection should be followed by adequate support for its implementation.

112. In the coming month, attention should be given to progress in the process of drafting of the Constitutional changes, adoption of the Law on Free Access to Information, the Law on Protection of Minorities, the Law on Conflict of Interest, the Judicial Rules of Procedure and appointment of judges and members of the High Prosecutors Council.

## **2. Council of Europe action**

113. The implementation of the Joint Project CoE/EAR “**Support of the Parliamentary Institutions**” started with providing expertise on the First Draft Rules of Procedure. It should improve the working methods of the Parliamentary committees and relations between the majority and opposition.

114. A CoE/EAR seminar on balance between **freedom of expression and information** and other fundamental rights was organised on 6 and 7 May. It will contribute to effective application of Articles 6, 8 and 10 of the ECHR in practice and to familiarisation of practitioners with the case-law of the ECHR.

115. On 6-7 May, a Workshop and a series of meetings were organised with the aim of launching **PACO Impact and CARDS Police projects** in Montenegro. National Coordinators are appointed including members of the envisaged working groups to take part in the work of the Regional Conferences, on 7-8 June/8-10 July in Strasbourg/Herceg Novi. Both projects will facilitate the implementation of the national Programme for anti-corruption and inclusion of the police into the regional cooperation structures for fight against organised crime.

116. The members of the working group drafting the **Compatibility Study** of Montenegrin legislation and practice with the ECHR, at a meeting held on 20 May, agreed to present the first draft texts at their meeting on 7 June. The completion of the Compatibility Study will provide an overview of the changes and amendments to existing legislation necessary to be in compliance with the ECHR.

117. Ms Dusanka Radovic, Coordinator of the Montenegrin expert team in charge of drafting the Compatibility Report of Montenegrin legislation and practice with the Revised **European Social Charter**, paid a study visit to Strasbourg, from 10-14 May in order to gain necessary knowledge and experiences for this kind of exercise.

118. An expert appraisal was provided on the **Draft Law on Notary**. It should contribute to the increase in the efficiency of justice.

119. An expert opinion was provided on the **Draft Law on Protection of National Minorities**. This should facilitate the procedure for its adoption and ensure more effective exercise of minority rights in Montenegro.

120. An expert meeting “Reforming the System of Territorial Organisation in Montenegro” was organised from 24-25 May in order to discuss the Guidelines for

drafting the **Law on Territorial Organisation**. In addition, expert opinions were provided on the Law on Capital and the Law on Historical Centre.

121. An expert opinion was also provided on the Draft Law on **Media** Transparency and on Prevention of Media Concentration and an expert meeting was organised on 27 May. It provides a framework for media legislation. The adoption of the Law will ensure further promotion of pluralism in the media. On 28 May the CoE provided an expert opinion on the Draft Broadcasting Development Strategy 2004 –2007, which should motivate faster implementation of the media legislation.

122. An exploratory mission within the regional project for **protection of cultural and natural heritage** for the purpose of elaborating the form and content of the Pilot project "Protection of Skodra Lake" was carried out from 27-29 May. This should promote the development of a sustainable policy for protection of cultural and natural heritage taking into consideration the cultural diversity.

### **3. Other actions**

123. The SAPI Steering Committee meeting held on 4-5 May included presentation of the CoE PACO Impact Project.

124. Regular meetings for exchange of information on political developments at the level of heads of office between the OSCE and the CoE continued.

125. The EU Council of Ministers decided on 17 May to terminate the work on the Feasibility Study for association and stabilization, because of the failure of S&M to fully implement the Constitutional Charter, the low level of co-operation with the ICTY and the lack of harmonization of the joint market.

# Pristina

## 1. Political Developments

126. On 25 May the **SRS**G of the United Nations and Head of UNMIK, Mr Harri Holkery, resigned on ill health grounds. On 12 May, Mr Holkeri had attended as the guest speaker the informal meeting of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg.
127. The Minister for Public Services in the PISG, Jakup Krasniqi, called for **reforms in local government**. He went on to explain that this would require the commitment of both local and international experts. A Working Group on Local Government has been formed, co-chaired by UNMIK and the Ministry of Public Services. The Working Group consists of representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Services, Representatives from Municipalities, Turkish Community, Serbian Community, and the Council of Europe. It is hoped that a Framework for a new Law on Local Self-Government will be completed by 15 July, and that a draft law is placed before the Parliamentary Assembly in early August.
128. UNMIK stated that it will neither help nor prevent the holding of the **Serbian Presidential elections** in Kosovo; however, rallies for candidates would not be permitted in Kosovo for security reasons.
129. A high level conference "Albanians and their Neighbours" was held in Lucerne Switzerland on 21-22 May with the participation of Kosovo Political Leaders. The meeting was organised jointly by the Government of Switzerland and the Project for Ethnic Relations. The purpose of the meeting was to create an atmosphere in which serious dialogue would take place between the political leaders of all ethnic communities in the region. The Council of Europe was represented by the Director General of Political Affairs and the Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly Bureau.
130. President Rugova inaugurated a project for the **reconstruction** of Serb, Roma, and Ashkali houses destroyed during the March violence. The President, who was accompanied by local Albanian and Serb leaders, promised that institutions of Kosovo would work to increase the governmental fund for reconstruction, in order to complete the repair of damaged houses by the autumn.
131. In the immediate **response to the March violence**, KFOR, UNMIK Police and the Kosovo Police Service reflected a serious inability of capacity in controlling the violence, and to protect members of minority communities. After the violence a number of challenges appeared in the field of human rights. A recent **OSCE Human Rights Report** stated that the March violence has significantly limited the willingness of members of minority groups to live, travel, and work in Kosovo.

## 2. Council of Europe action

132. The CoE office, the Legal Policy Unit of the Department of Justice, and the Office of the Legal Advisor to the SRSG discussed the content and the beneficiaries of training on the **legal framework of extradition**, in respect of Kosovo. It was agreed that this training would be held in September, with the CoE providing expertise on European standards in the field of extradition.
133. In cooperation with the Kosovo Judicial Institute, the CoE office organised on 14 May a seminar on the **independence of the Judiciary**.
134. On 17–19 May, the **CARDS Project** on strengthening police capacities in the fight against economic and organised crime in south-eastern Europe was officially launched in Kosovo. A well attended workshop and several meetings were organised to officially present the Project to UNMIK authorities, and to brainstorm on the specific needs and activities that will be implemented through this project in Kosovo.
135. Following a request from the Department of Justice, and in consideration of the key role played by the CoE in the drafting process of the new criminal and criminal procedure code, a workshop was organised by the CoE office on 20 May, for **international judges and prosecutors** on the new criminal procedure code.
136. The CoE office organised, in cooperation with the OSCE and the Kosovo Judicial Institute, a seminar for judges and prosecutors in respect of the **property law** in Kosovo. The seminar took place on 21 May 2004. The provisions of the UNMIK Regulation 1999/23 were analysed by experts, and then the participants were informed of the European standards in this field as set by ECHR case law.
137. Throughout May, the office was involved in the public debate on the role of the **media** during the March events. Discussions at various round tables focused on the performance of the media, the need for a new training approach and for a coordinated support strategy of the donors in Kosovo.
138. Following visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, Mr Mevlut Cavusoglu, Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Migration, Refugees and population of **persons unaccounted for** as a result of armed Conflicts, visited Kosovo. He was accompanied by Mr John Dalhuisen from the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights. In a number of bi-lateral meetings, the CoE delegation was made aware of the large number of missing, prior to and during the armed conflict in Kosovo. In addition they were also made aware of those missing since the ending of the armed conflict.

## 3. Other action

139. On 31 May, the office took part in a workshop organised by the EAR in view of the extension of Legal Aid, currently provided only in civil cases, to the criminal and administrative area. In the past, Council of Europe experts made Recommendations for the development of a sustainable Legal Aid system in Kosovo.
140. In cooperation with UNDP, and the OSCE, the Head of Office chaired a meeting of Presidents of **Municipal Assemblies** from all areas of Kosovo. The objective of the



meeting was to initiate a low profile dialogue between all municipal leaders in Kosovo, and how to prevent violent events such as those witnessed during the period from 17 to 19 March.

# Tirana

## 1. Political and legal developments

141. The government adopted by mid-May a draft law, on the **legalisation of illegal buildings**. The draft law which should now be examined by the Parliament does not, at this stage, provide for measures to deal with the situation of builders of illegal property not reaching a purchasing agreement with the owners of the occupied land. This is of a nature to create further problems, once the final ownership of the land is settled after the proceedings provided for by the adoption of the draft law on property.
142. The Parliament is presently discussing the **draft law on recognition, restitution and compensation of property**. The debate on the legality of the taxation of fortunes by the Communist regime in 1945 has been at the centre of discussions and after heavy pressure from the Democratic Party it was agreed to delete the paragraph in Article 4 which excluded from the benefit of the present draft Law property taken further to the 1945 law. On the occasion of this debate, a conflict appeared between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, both members of the opposition coalition.
143. The question of **electoral reform** is at the centre of debates in public opinion and in the political sphere. The Prime Minister made a statement before Parliament announcing public funding in the area of € 7 million to finance measures for issuing ID cards and as a consequence improve the establishment of voters' lists. This was recalled by the Minister of Local Government Mr Ben Blushi when meeting with the Council of Europe mission on electoral reform.
144. Media have published information concerning the **declarations of property** made by certain leading politicians and senior civil servants further to the legal obligation to do so to the High Inspectorate of Declaration and Control of Property. Whereas, according to media, a great number of Members of Parliament have erroneously filled in their declarations and will have to correct them, it also appears from the information published that leading politicians have personal assets and property of quite small value.

## 2. Council of Europe action

145. Following discussions held during the Secretary General's visit to Albania in April, and further to the Joint Recommendation issued on 26 April 2004, a fact-finding mission jointly organised by DG III and the Venice Commission with OSCE/ODIHR came to Tirana to meet with all Albanian and international interlocutors involved in the process of **electoral reform**. The experts were assisted by the Council of Europe Office in Tirana.
146. The Special Adviser travelled twice to Shkodra to meet with officials, NGOs and representatives of the religious communities to collect information and devise possible ways in which the CoE may assist in tackling the issue of **blood feuds**. On his second visit, he took part in a reconciliation ceremony between two families involved in a blood feud. Media were present and prominent coverage was given to the event on TV and in the Albanian national press. Clearly, longer-term measures must be enforced in

order to counter and eradicate this phenomenon. The CoE is ready to assist the authorities in any way it can in this regard.

### **3. Other action/development**

147. A Member of Parliament, owner of a newspaper in Tirana, has for months been in open conflict with the Prime Minister, and is being sued on several grounds. In a first judgement, Mr Nikoll Lesi's newspaper was fined 2,000,000 lek (20,000 USD). It is quite common in Albania that newspapers and journalists are sued for libel and defamation and condemned to heavy fines.

148. The Prime Minister having mentioned recently the need to draft a specific law to deal with media, there is now fear among journalists that this would be a move to restrict the freedom of the press.

# Skopje

## 1. Political and legislative developments

149. The Parliamentary debate on the proposed new Government began on 31 May. The only new appointment proposed is the replacement for Prime Minister Designate Hari Kostov as Minister of Interior. The **Government's Programme** focused on full and consistent implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, as well as completion of the decentralisation process, judicial reform, intensified efforts to combat organised crime and corruption, EU and NATO integration and enhanced economic activity/investment and reduced employment.
150. The main **opposition party** VMRO-DPMNE went through a lengthy internal crisis centred around the struggle between party leader Nikola Gruevski and former Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski. The press suggested the party may split.
151. The revised **Law on Local Elections** was adopted on 26 May. Mayors will be elected in two rounds. The required turnout was reduced from 50% to 30%. A 30% mandatory quota for women has been introduced. The local elections are scheduled for 17 October.
152. Parliament will resume examination of the three **key decentralisation laws** on municipal boundaries, financing of municipalities and the city of Skopje once the new Government is confirmed. A further 41 legislative initiatives or amendments are in the final stage of preparation. The Minister of Local Self-Government expressed confidence that all will be adopted before the end of July. The Government's long-awaited strategy and action plan for implementation of decentralisation is to be presented on 10 June.
153. The government announced, as part of the public administration reform, the setting up of a **new sector** on the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. It will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister Musa Xhaferi.
154. The six persons detained in the **Rastanski Lozja case** began a hunger strike in which they were joined at one point by up to 40 other prisoners in Sutka Prison. Some were protesting against the length of their court proceedings, others against their sentences. The Ombudsman visited the prison on 27 May. The OSCE are monitoring the Rastanski Lozja case and have reported no procedural violations so far.

## 2. Council of Europe action

155. The **CARDS Regional Programme** on "Strengthening police capacities against serious crime in South-East Europe" was launched with a round table on 4 May concerning the module for which the Council of Europe is responsible, namely **tools against economic crime and organised crime**. The objective was to establish contact with the relevant local counterparts, provide comprehensive information about the project and discuss possible elements for a Programme of activities.
156. Fair trial standards under **Article 6 of the ECHR** were the topic of a workshop organised on 17-18 May by the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the organisation

“All for fair trials”, a coalition of 20 NGOs working on trial observation. The objective was to train the trial observers to base their work on the requirements of Article 6 and on the case-law of the Court.

157. The Resident Expert spoke at a conference on “**Reform of the judiciary; independence and efficiency**” organised on 28 May by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the liberal democratic party. It was an occasion to recall the fundamental principles enshrined in Article 6 of the ECHR and in instruments such as the Committee of Ministers Recommendation R (94) 12 on the independence, efficiency and role of judges. The Minister of Justice announced that an Action Plan on judicial reform is to be published within three months from the confirmation of the new Government.

### **3. Other action**

158. On the initiative of the EU Special Representative, the international community in Skopje is seeking to focus further the many efforts under way in the field of **decentralisation**. This includes conveying to the authorities the need to adopt speedily the remaining laws and to ensure their timely implementation.

159. Work should take off in the coming weeks on the elaboration of a national **training strategy for local government staff** and elected members. Efforts are being made to ensure an integrated and inclusive approach. Working together with, inter alia, the Ministry of Local Self-Government, the Association of Local Municipalities (ZELS), the Civil Servants Agency, UNDP and the OSCE, the Council of Europe is seeking to provide assistance, based on similar work carried out successfully in other countries in the region.

160. The **School of Political Studies** held its third seminar in Ohrid from 14-17 May, focusing on “Ethics in the governmental and political communication”. Among the guest speakers were Deputy Prime Minister Radmila Sekerinska and Adrian Severin, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania. The seminar was the last in a series aimed at promoting the Skopje school at national level. A final seminar will take place in Strasbourg from 20 to 25 June.

161. The Strategic Contact Group on Judicial Reform met and decided to focus initially on **judges’ appointments and training**. The Council of Europe is playing a central role in this work and providing the standards on the basis of which the international community will seek to develop a shared policy.

**APPENDIX**  
**Additional details not included in the main report**

## **SARAJEVO**

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### **EDUCATION**

#### **Education for Democratic Citizenship**

- 13-14 May – Two CoE experts participated in a second seminar for teachers who produce the modules on teaching Children's Rights in primary schools in the Federation of BiH. The working session was held in Brcko Teachers Training Centre. The group of 20 teachers - and potential multipliers - worked on the finalization of the book of modules that will be introduced to the primary schools in the Federation of BiH as a recommended reference book for all primary school teachers.

#### **Modernising the Management and Governance Capacities of BiH Universities**

- 9-16 May: Main institutional review visit by the team of the European University Association (EUA) to Mostar West and Mostar Dzemal Bijedic. Key challenges in the reform process were discussed. Evaluation results are highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of both universities: The need to move towards integrated universities has been underlined.
- 19 May: The CoE office attended the Higher Education Coordination Board (HECB) meeting in Srpsko Sarajevo. The Board discussed the consequences of non-adoption of the HE State level Framework law. Some of the members voiced their frustration and said that they should have been more active in proposing the adoption of the law during parliamentary sessions. The Board voiced the opinion that continuing work on lower level legislation should be deferred until the Constitutional Court has given its opinion on the Framework law. It further discussed financial cash flow problems from the Federation of BiH and in light of continued financial problems, started to discuss alternative funding strategies of the Board. World Bank experts attended the meeting within their mandate to evaluate the Bank funded Higher Education projects.
- 9-22 May: Main visit of two CoE experts to conduct the Higher Education Coordination Board (HECB) review. At the end of the second review visit, the expert team presented their evaluation results. The CoE expert team recommends that HECB shall be transformed into a BiH Rectors Conference, where only Rectors are members of the Board. The need for a strategic plan and increased public relations, specifically with academic stakeholders, was highlighted.
- 25 May: Coordination meeting with EUA experts in Brussels: The CoE office met members of the EUA team of all BiH universities to discuss the results of the institutional reviews and define follow up activities for the second year of the University Management Reform Project.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Education on Human Rights**

- 6 – 8 May, Teslić, 13 – 15 May, Bjelašnica: Training on ECHR for lawyers
- 24 May, Sarajevo: Seminar for Parliamentarians on Ombudsman institutions.
- May: Numerous meetings were held with the various Ombudsman institutions and the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees to come up with a coherent and structured plan for restructuring the three existing institutions. The MHRR has submitted a report on 31 May to the CoM for approval. The CoE, together with the EC and OSCE, is examining the content.

### **RULE OF LAW**

- 14 May: Meeting with the drafters of the Commentaries on the Law on Enforcement procedure and a German expert, to discuss the first submissions and editorial guidelines.

### **Joint CoE/EC project on Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centers in BiH**

- 26-27 May, Sarajevo: Seminar on Protection of Intellectual Property Rights - second seminar from the cycle of three planned on this topic: participants were criminal court judges and prosecutors from the Federation BiH and Republika Srpska.