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Ten Years of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina: Reflections on a Decade and Thoughts on the Future¹

Introduction

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was established on 8 December 1995. It will soon celebrate its tenth anniversary. Built on the foundation of a small OSCE Office in Sarajevo, it took its shape from the tasks awarded to it in the General Framework Agreement on Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, better known today as the Dayton Agreement. The OSCE was to support regional stabilization (Annex 1-B, Articles II, IV, and V), elections (Annex 3), and human rights (Annex 6, Article XIII). All these tasks were important elements of the Agreement's broad goals of stabilization, democratization, and peace implementation.

The evolution of the Mission's approach to fulfilling its mandate has, in many ways, reflected the evolution of post-conflict peace-building, stabilization, and democratization activities more generally. Initially, elections were front and centre in the Mission's work, just as they were in the catalogue of democratization strategies. In its early post-war elections in 1996 and 1997, however, Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated that while elections were perhaps necessary, they were not in and of themselves sufficient to constitute a democratization strategy. It quickly became clear that other activities, including civil society promotion, institution building, and local government reform were equally necessary. This broader design, as well as reflecting a more realistic approach to state-building, state-strengthening, and post-conflict democratization, also reflected the OSCE's own concept of comprehensive security.

This concept, deriving from the OSCE's "three dimensional" structure, which focuses simultaneously on the political and military, economic and environmental, and humanitarian and human aspects of security, provided the appropriate framework for the evolution of the Mission. Election activities grew from physically conducting elections to a range of political and democratization activities, including political party and civil society development, media monitoring, voter education, supporting women in politics, and good governance. Human rights initiatives came to include: general human rights monitoring, support for human rights institutions, including the three ombudsman institutions, Roma and national minorities programmes, support for the establishment of rule of law, including trial monitoring, and, from 2002, a

¹ The opinions expressed in this contribution are the author's own.

leading role in education reform. Regional stabilization ultimately addressed a host of tasks related to confidence-building measures, arms control, and, most recently (and most comprehensively), defence reform.

The Human Dimension

The Mission's involvement in the human dimension can broadly be divided into its democratization and human rights aspects. The Mission's role in elections, an early but essential component of democratization, has diminished considerably over recent years. It began by organizing, conducting, supervising, and funding six rounds of elections between 1996 and 2000. In 2002, however, the local authorities organized the elections and in the autumn of 2004 the appropriate domestic bodies paid for them as well. At the end of June 2005, the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) withdrew from their positions on the Election Commission, leaving the Commission as a body composed solely of members from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Mission and the OHR will play only an advisory role until the elections scheduled for October 2006. Although many of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens still recognize the OSCE as the organization that drove the election process in the past, the future of election operations is now squarely in the hands of the country's own experts and officials. The responsibility for this key democratic process thus now forms part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's social and political environment.

As the Mission's role in elections has evolved, so too has its approach to the related issues of democratization and governance. Despite organizational changes and varying approaches adopted over the years, the Department of Democratization has always stayed focused on promoting good governance and developing a civil society. Its intent has always been twofold: to strengthen the tools, systems, and structures of government and to strengthen the capacity of citizens to influence the formal organs of power. The Mission's Parliamentary Support Programme has worked at the state level to encourage the transparency, accountability, and professionalism of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly through the adoption of rules of procedure, the establishment of a Research Directorate at the Parliamentary Assembly, and the opening of a Parliamentary Press Gallery. At the municipal and cantonal levels, the Mission has tried to promote the professional and transparent management of public funds through improved budgeting and accounting practices, fair procurement procedures, and strategic planning. Efforts to improve the management of human resources have included the encouragement of appropriate levels of staffing, fair and competitive employment, and universally applied employment standards and qualifications. In 2005, the launch of a comprehensive programme designed to support local involvement in municipal reform – called UGOVOR or “contract” – has en-

gaged Bosnia and Herzegovina's municipal officials in a multi-year reform initiative. If it works, this will result in the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the establishment of municipal development planning committees (MDPCs), the adoption of municipal codes of ethics, the implementation of laws in line with the European Charter on Local Self-Government, and the creation of a range of citizen-municipality partnership initiatives.

Once tasks have been completed, the Mission does not seek to prolong them. Eleven political resource centres (PRCs), which had for years provided support to political parties and politicians, closed between 2003-2004. This reflected the end of the "emergency" political support needed in the immediate post-war years and during the maturation of Bosnian politics. The Mission's media-related activities largely came to an end in 2001. This was another effort initially tied to the conducting of free and fair elections, but one also necessary in the development of a responsible and accurate public dialogue on issues of broad state and local importance. Important elements of this work included support for anti-defamation laws, multiethnic broadcasts, and a media helpline for journalists experiencing threats or pressure. Since the end of the formal media programme, the Mission has remained involved in the issue through such means as the encouragement of the enactment of a Freedom of Access to Information law. The Mission's support for the development of a free press has ensured a more balanced media than would have been possible in the post-war environment without such a programme.

Similarly, the Mission's civil society programme has been gradually transferred to local organizations, with the Mission playing an advisory and supporting role rather than taking the more hands-on approach of years past. In 2004, with the Mission's advice and support, more than 100 citizens' groups organized pre-election debates on government accountability and initiated campaigns for local community improvements such as cleaner streets and safer communities. In addition, more than 400 partnership initiatives between citizens and local authorities have created a space where people can address issues such as youth participation in public life, gender equality, the environment, employment, and education. The Mission's Citizen Outreach and Participation Initiative (COPI) has also provided citizens and officials from 30 municipalities with training on municipal decision-making processes and tools to enhance citizen participation. This has resulted in the introduction of new policies in several municipalities.

The Mission's democratization efforts have also tried to increase the participation of women and young people in politics as well as to involve these and other under-represented groups of citizens in the broader policy debates. The Mission has also lavished special attention on the youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina – dubbed the "successor generation" – in order to stem the brain-drain and to encourage young people to recognize that they can make a difference in their communities, in business, and in public life. Overall, the

Mission's comprehensive approach to democratization attempts to reflect the realities of democratic transition as well as the dense web of inter-linked elements needed for a truly sustainable democratic society.

In human rights, the Mission made one of the most significant contributions to post-conflict rehabilitation as a whole as a founding member of the inter-agency Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP) process. This was set up in 1999 to enable effective international community oversight of the administrative process through which pre-war owners or occupants were able to reclaim their properties. Together with the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Mission directly supported the fulfilment of this basic right to property by taking on clients and by meeting with local officials tasked with carrying out the return of property, to ensure that the rights of all the country's citizens, regardless of ethnicity, received equal respect in accordance with the law. Since the end of the war, more than 211,933 claims have been submitted for habitable property, and, as of January 2005, 92.95 per cent of these claims had resulted in repossession. Furthermore, the Mission continues to monitor the situation of people requiring temporary accommodation to ensure that their housing needs are effectively and equitably addressed and follows and comments on legislation related to housing rights as well as the broader issues of economic and social rights.

Of course, the process of property restitution does not always mean that people return to their pre-war homes. While some people have been eager to return to their former residences, others have opted to reclaim and then sell their property instead. Even so, the PLIP process has great significance, for the right to property is not one that had previously been confirmed in post-conflict regions. This process has thus established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a model in this area of human rights protection. It is also an essential part of a larger regional effort, the "3 x 3 Initiative", that this Mission is engaged in. Together with the UNHCR and the European Commission in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are endeavouring to bring Annex VII of the Dayton Agreement, the Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons, to a close as quickly as possible.

Building institutions and mechanisms to ensure lasting domestic human rights protections in Bosnia and Herzegovina has also been a priority for the OSCE. Annex VI of the Dayton Agreement, the Agreement on Human Rights, created a Commission on Human Rights, comprising two parts: the Office of the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Chamber. This Agreement assigned the OSCE certain responsibilities with regard to both parts, and even made the Chairman-in-Office responsible for appointing the first ombudsman. Furthermore, the Mission has been the principal sponsor of the ombudsmen institutions in the entities.² Latterly, however, the Mission's focus

2 The Federation's ombudsman institution, in fact, stems from the Washington Agreement of 1994.

has moved on to the challenging and often highly politicized process of unifying the country's three ombudsman institutions, thereby bringing Bosnia and Herzegovina in line with its commitments to the Council of Europe. Similarly, in 2004, the Mission worked closely with the OHR to monitor and assist in the transfer of the competencies of the Human Rights Chamber to the Human Rights Commission of the Constitutional Court.

The Mission's work in human rights, however, ranges beyond the restoration of property and the building of institutions. To help combat the global scourge of trafficking in human beings – an OSCE priority shared by all participating States – the Mission has seconded an expert member of staff to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Office of the State Co-ordinator for Anti-Trafficking, reviewed Bosnia and Herzegovina's National Referral Mechanism for victims, and conducted public awareness campaigns to alert potential victims to the problem of trafficking and to inform law enforcement officials about how to identify victims. To assist local authorities in progressively securing economic and social rights for all citizens, the Mission conducted an assessment of the barriers that citizens encounter in gaining access to services such as healthcare, social assistance, and housing, and is currently initiating a discussion on how to improve access to these rights. The Mission's work in support of the rights of Roma has included the civil registration of births of Roma children in co-operation with Roma communities and municipal authorities, a necessary step to ensure non-discriminatory access to healthcare, education, and housing. In doing all this, the Mission has moved from taking on individual cases to a more systemic approach – one based on ensuring the existence of domestic mechanisms and remedies as an important element in the normalization of Bosnia and Herzegovina's human rights structures.

Another very important component of the Mission's human rights work is its support for the rule of law. The Mission has separated support for rule of law from its other human rights work in order to draw a clear differentiation between the Mission's role as an advocate of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina and as an impartial observer and monitor of the country's judicial and legal processes. In an effort to strengthen the rule of law and to establish an efficient, accessible, and equitable justice system, Bosnia and Herzegovina introduced new criminal procedure codes at state and entity levels in early to mid 2003. This resulted in a fundamental change in the procedures governing criminal investigations and the administration of justice in the courts. The Mission undertook a project to assess the implementation of the new codes and monitored more than 1,000 criminal trial proceedings across Bosnia and Herzegovina. It then shared its findings and recommendations with local institutions involved in criminal law and released a formal trial monitoring report to the public in late 2004.

The Mission has been involved in war crimes matters, too. It has long monitored war crimes cases tried by the domestic courts and this year it released a comprehensive report highlighting obstacles that hinder the fair and

effective prosecution of these cases. OSCE human rights experts assisted local authorities and the OHR in the establishment of a War Crimes Chamber of the State Court and now participate actively in initiatives aimed at improving regional co-operation in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes. With the transfer of more war crimes cases from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague to the courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this particular activity will likely take on increasing relevance.

The Mission's role in education reform, almost unique among field missions, is another important and highly visible element in its human dimension activities. In the years immediately after the war, the international community did not consider education reform a particularly high priority. But over time it became increasingly clear that education had been made a political tool of nationalist actors more interested in segregation and division than in the development of an educational system in step with European standards of access and equality. In 2002, in an effort to raise the profile of education reform and to bring the many and varied reform activities that were underway together under one roof, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) assigned the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina the co-ordinator's role for international community efforts in the field of education.

The Mission focused its efforts in particular on the depoliticization of education. It first assisted in establishing and then worked closely with the Co-ordination Board for the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Special Needs and Rights of Returnee Children. This initiative attempted to address the needs of the children of returnees belonging to local minorities by encouraging them to attend schools in their communities rather than in other areas where they would be in the majority. Further education-related activities include supporting the efforts of the Co-ordination Board to develop a set of guidelines on appropriate, non-political, non-divisive school names and symbols. In co-operation with the Council of Europe, the Mission also supported the establishment of an independent Textbook Commission. This Commission is responsible for developing guidelines for history and geography textbook authors so that their books permit students to acquire a basic understanding of the history and geography of all the peoples who make up the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Recognizing the country's diverse population, the Mission also co-chaired a working group that drafted a National Action Plan on the Educational Needs of Roma and Other National Minorities, agreed to in February 2004 by all education ministers at both entity and cantonal levels.

The adoption of legislation consistent with European standards is an important goal, but it is not easy to achieve, for the successful enactment of education legislation often requires the surmounting of serious political barriers. Following the adoption in June 2003 of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, which prescribes equal access to education and

allows for greater school autonomy and increased parent-teacher involvement, the Mission urged the Republika Srpska, the Federation's cantons, and the District of Brčko to adopt the necessary legislation to harmonize their laws with the state-level framework, providing support in the drafting of the necessary by-laws. Despite interventions by the High Representative, this process has still not been completed in some areas of the country. A state-level higher education law, though essential for the implementation of commitments made by Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities in ratifying the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention and signing the 1999 Bologna Declaration is, as of this writing, stymied. This is due more to a continuing emphasis, among certain political actors in the country, on control of such things as financing than to any objection to creating quality higher education. There are many other challenges in the field of education as well: the end of the practice of segregating students by ethnicity in what are called "two schools under one roof", the effective staffing and financing of educational institutions, and stronger vocational and adult education opportunities. These challenges must be met, as there can be no comprehensive security for a country or a region if the system of education fails to serve its children well.

The Politico-Military Dimension

The Mission's work in the politico-military dimension has had two sides: support for the reform of domestic military and security structures and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina in fulfilling its OSCE security commitments. For several years, the Mission helped the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to reduce both military spending and the number of defence personnel; it also keeps a close eye on the resulting demobilization. The success of these reductions created a concomitant need to reduce excess stockpiles of arms and ammunition in a country (and region) awash with weapons. As a result, the Mission assisted with a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) pilot project in which 20,000 surplus small arms and light weapons were melted down. This initiative has served as a model for future arms destruction in the wider region of South-eastern Europe.

Over time, as it became clear that, despite the success of its stabilization and arms control activities under the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina could not truly become a stable and sustainable state without significant defence restructuring and reform, the Mission began to play a leading role in the broader defence reform effort inaugurated in 2003.³ One of the most important developments in this effort was the creation of a state-level

3 See the report of the Defence Reform Commission, *The Path to Partnership for Peace*, published in September 2003, available at www.ohr.int. See also Heinz Vetschera, From Regional Stabilization to Security Co-operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina – The Role of the OSCE Mission, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2004*, pp. 381-412.

Ministry of Defence in March 2004 and the appointment of the country's first Defence Minister, Nikola Radovanović. This would have been unthinkable just a few years earlier. Although NATO has now assumed responsibility for driving defence reform, the Mission is continuing to support this important effort. It has involved itself in issues relating to the staffing and organization of the state-level Defence Ministry. It has also introduced a new doctrine of command and control for the country's armed forces and has developed training programmes to prepare the armed forces for future participation in peace support operations. After the establishment of the Joint Defence and Security Policy Committee in December 2003, the Mission worked with both Houses of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly to enhance democratic control of the armed forces.

The Mission's more specific work to help Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfil its OSCE politico-military commitments has also matured over the past ten years. The Mission has long supported the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Articles II and IV of Dayton's Annex 1-B in advancing measures for sub-regional arms control in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro). Through these collective efforts, the Agreement on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (Article II Agreement) was successfully concluded by common consent on 28 September 2004 – another sign of post-war normalization. The politico-military dimension could not ultimately be successful in ensuring comprehensive security without the other two Helsinki "baskets", but neither would the establishment of stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region generally be possible without this essential component of comprehensive security.

The Economic and Environmental Dimension

Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina consistently point out that their number one concern is the economic situation. Just as in every country, the people want jobs, opportunities, and a better future for their families. Although the role played in Bosnia and Herzegovina by large institutions such as the World Bank and the European Commission often overshadows and even determines the OSCE's work on the economy and environment, the OSCE can nevertheless contribute in its own way to building a stable economy as a fundamental part of a stable society. For that reason, the Mission has sought to support the development in Bosnia and Herzegovina of an environment conducive to economic growth. It has implemented a variety of measures aimed not at competing with other international financial institutions or development agencies, but at taking advantage of the political nature of the Organization and its ability to foster broad interaction with the citizens of the country, especially through the Mission's 22 field offices.

The Mission has, for instance, focused its economic work on corporate governance to promote the principles of fairness, openness, accountability, participatory decision-making, and consistency in the application of legislation in the workplace. Towards this end, the Mission encouraged the nine largest employers in the country to introduce fair employment practices and to adopt and incorporate fair employment principles in their by-laws and internal documents. The Mission's staff throughout the country organized round-tables and radio shows on the protection of workers from discrimination and developed comprehensive information leaflets to raise citizens' awareness about their basic labour rights. Recognizing that sound, transparent, and professional public administration is crucial to attracting both domestic and foreign investment, the Mission's public administration experts have helped introduce municipalities to accounting standards and open and participatory budgeting processes. Entrepreneurship training and awareness-building activities have targeted young people in order to encourage new business development and new ways of thinking in a market economy – skills that can be used not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in the wider Europe.

Environmental protection and promotion were not priorities in the first years after the war. Understandably, citizens in need of housing, food, jobs, and basic services tended, at that time, to view environmental concerns as a luxury. In recent years, however, concern for the environment has begun to grow. It is viewed as a resource in its own right and as a potential magnet for the development of the tourism industry. The Mission's support for environmental endeavours has focused on empowering citizens and developing links between citizens' groups and the relevant governmental bodies. The Mission has supported community initiatives to improve water quality, clear trash, and preserve natural land reserves. The Mission is also encouraging the growth of citizen environmental protection advocacy groups and involving school children and young adults in the protection of Bosnia and Herzegovina's natural resources. This should help guarantee that this country's considerable environmental assets will be preserved and protected.

Lessons Learned

In the past ten years, it is not only Bosnia and Herzegovina that has changed, developed, and evolved. So has the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many lessons have been learned during this process, from the need to define strategic objectives at the Head Office level to the means that Mission field staff may use to implement projects in small villages. Many of these lessons and associated recommendations – related to staffing and personnel issues, or post-war election timing, for example – have already been much explored, including in past volumes of this Yearbook. The following, therefore,

highlights five selected lessons to be considered during this time of reflection on the purpose and preferred methods of the OSCE as a regional security organization.

Field Presence Matters

The Mission's field presence has consistently been its core strength. More than ever, it now offers something that other international organizations operating in the country cannot. As organizations have begun to reduce their presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina at an ever-swifter pace over the past few years, they have tended to concentrate their remaining staff in Sarajevo or one of the larger regional cities. No other organization has retained its commitment to working closely within and with communities throughout the country.

This presence matters in an environment in which serious structural reforms necessitate long-lasting commitment. Mission staff members, both international and national, have, over time, developed relationships with municipal officials, local civic leaders, and citizens that have resulted in progress in areas such as public administration reform, community development, and the depoliticization of the country's schools. This strong network of experts has also benefited the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina more generally, as it is well-known that the OSCE has the "eyes and ears on the ground" that enable it to serve as the primary source of local information, context, and background. Where many organizations take the "parachute approach", visiting communities only when conducting workshops or holding meetings, the Mission understands that it is the *process* that matters and that the relationships and activities leading to and following an event provide the real basis of sustainable change. Although reductions in the size of the Mission and the field presence are inevitable in the coming years, retaining this connection with people across the length and breadth of this varied country will remain important for the success of the OSCE's agenda. One lesson that other organizations working in other parts of the world might derive from this experience is the benefits of having a presence (where possible) that is not limited to capital cities and large urban centres.

Mandate Matters

Missions operate better when everyone in them knows why they are there and what they are there to do. Mandates awarded to OSCE field missions form important tools in making this clear. They help to define the strategic goals and objectives of a Mission. At the same time, however, they need to be flexible enough to allow Missions to evolve, as the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has done, within the parameters they set. In a complex, post-war environment like that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mandates that clearly de-

fine priorities and objectives, and assign lead and associated agencies, are a further aid to clarity, commitment, and cohesion in the international community. Embedding such mandate definitions in the terms of a peace agreement or in memoranda of understanding with governments and support organizations can help. In the countries of the old Communist bloc, people used to explain the existence of shabby building facades, garbage-strewn courtyards, and paradoxically immaculate apartments this way: "What's mine is mine; what's yours is yours; what's everyone's is no one's." As this adage suggests, a clear definition of roles and responsibilities can bring with it accountability, save much needless duplication of effort, and prevent important matters from falling through the cracks.

Local Capacity Matters

One frequently hears the criticism that international organizations foster "brain drain" in the countries in which they work, siphoning away the most talented and motivated people from domestic institutions and businesses by means of higher pay packages and enhanced opportunities.⁴ In post-war and transition countries, international organizations do indeed often fill a gap in the typically weak labour markets. This can have a variety of both intended and unintended consequences. However, such organizations can also use this opportunity to build local capacity and support the development of embryonic institutions. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has long relied on its national professional staff for their skills, expertise, and local knowledge; has long recognized the complementary role that international and national Mission members can play; and has long been proud of the dedication and capability of all its staff. Nevertheless, there remains room for improvement to ensure that this capacity effectively transfers at the appropriate time to domestic institutions.

The Mission learned an important lesson through its work with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Commission and associated elected bodies, such as polling station committees. It discovered that an unfortunate level of staff turnover had led to a loss of institutional knowledge and expertise over the years. It became clear that, in addition to supporting new expert staff in these organizations, it was also vital to work with (often older) staff who had been with these bodies for years, as they were the most likely to remain in such organizations. The urge to support "new blood", youth, and politically neutral citizens must be tempered by the reality that the individuals in established positions will often remain in place even through times of transition. Ensuring that professional development activities include and support everyone can help to spread the benefits of capacity building.

4 See for example, Susan Woodward, Economic Priorities for Successful Peace Implementation, in: Stephen John Stedman/Donald Rothchild/Elizabeth M. Cousens (eds), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, pp. 183-214.

The direct seconding of domestic experts to local institutions offers another useful opportunity. One practical example of this is the Mission's secondment of an anti-trafficking expert to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Office of the State Co-ordinator for Anti-Trafficking. Direct insertion of qualified expert staff could confer a host of benefits, including the attraction of young people to government service, the end or at least minimization of nepotism in public administration, and the retention of expertise where it is most needed. This approach could potentially be expanded, with an increasing number of OSCE Mission national professional staff seconded to positions in local offices in which they could continue to implement reform programmes as insiders. A long-term salary-tapering scheme could ensure appropriate pay scales, with the local body assuming an increasing share of the salary as it becomes established and more financially stable. Memoranda of understanding could formalize the arrangements and ensure that the seconded staff remain in the position for the length of time necessary to protect against loss of experience and expertise. Of course, such an approach would have to be explored and discussed carefully at the OSCE Permanent Council, for there may be some participating States who do not fully agree on the extent to which such local capacity building can make a contribution to the OSCE's overall goals.

Sustainability Matters

Closely related to the issue of domestic capacity is the broader need for sustainable institutions. As illustrated in the review of its activities above, the Mission has made a concerted effort to begin the transition of responsibilities to the appropriate local bodies and institutions. Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders largely agree on several broad mutual goals, such as membership of the Partnership for Peace and eventual entry into the European Union. But of course this is not enough. A multitude of often difficult tasks remains before the country achieves prizes of this kind. With the transition of responsibilities to local control, the role of the Mission and the larger international community is also transformed – from driving a process to being partners in it. As the Mission articulates its goals and plans for 2006 and beyond, it will be important to invite, encourage, and even exhort its partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina to contribute to this vision and to agree to work together towards such goals.

Impact Matters

In any organization it can be very easy to spend so much time fighting fires that there is little left to reflect on why the fire started in the first place. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mission field staff are often so busy planning projects, meeting with mayors, and monitoring events that it can be difficult to

step back and evaluate and assess the long-term impact of these activities. Impact assessment, while a part of the ideal project management approach and a staple in every researcher's toolbox is often seen as an impossible luxury.

This is unfortunate, for there is a great breadth of field experience that could inform future projects and future missions. A better understanding of the real and demonstrable impact of information campaigns on citizen issue awareness, of the behavioural patterns of citizens who have and have not participated in workshops arranged by the Mission, and of the reform-mindedness of citizens in areas with or without nearby Mission field offices could help to improve planning at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. In 2004, the Mission stepped up efforts to measure public opinion on issues of interest to it through opinion polling and focus groups. These revealed much about needs and perceptions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such impact analysis will not change the Organization's plans or approaches overnight. It may, however, help to ensure that planning decisions are made in an informed environment and that field activities do not become an end in themselves but are a productive element of a broader strategy.

Conclusions – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, changes to the institution of the Office of the High Representative will inevitably influence the shape, composition, and role of the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is especially true given that the institution is increasingly becoming that of an "EU Special Representative" and that the frequently controversial, though often quite necessary, Bonn Powers may well be consigned to the dustbin of post-Dayton history. In a future "post-OHR world", the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is likely to adopt a more discreet approach, increasingly playing an advisory and admonitory role rather than a pressuring and precipitating one – an important shift as local governmental and non-governmental bodies assume ever greater responsibility for their own fates. Mission support of necessary legislative reform will be another core element in the gradual transition process, as the long-term sustainability of the country's institutions depends on their being embedded in appropriate legal frameworks and systems. The OSCE's leverage as a political organization will be important in lobbying for necessary changes of this kind. The Mission's work in trial monitoring could become a model for future monitoring work, demonstrating the value the Mission can add to domestic institutions by serving as an objective observer and helping to ensure adherence to the highest legal standards. The Mission is fortunate to have built its work and its successes on relationships and partnerships with citizens and officials, for the end of the Bonn Powers will not affect these partnership-driven initiatives.

Whatever the future may hold for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its OSCE Mission, there is no denying that much has changed during the past ten years. People who left the country in 1996 or 1997 and did not return again until 2005 are astonished by the transformation that has taken place. Ten years ago discussions on a single, state-level Ministry of Defence or on the need for a new constitution would have been unthinkable; now, although such issues may not be resolved quickly, they are at least discussed openly. As the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina looks beyond its ten-year anniversary, the question inevitably arises of the extent to which such progress would have been possible in the absence of the sustained field mission.

Post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation cannot happen in a piecemeal fashion. They must proceed as a part of a larger strategy. The OSCE's three dimensions can provide the necessary framework for reform. However, although comprehensive security may be articulated in formal documents and declarations, putting it into practice often requires a commitment on the ground. In effect, the Mission has engaged in a great experiment to put the comprehensive approach to security embodied in the 1975 Helsinki Act into practice in a society emerging from conflict. At least in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and perhaps elsewhere, an OSCE field mission has proven to be one of the best means of assisting a country in meeting the commitments it has adopted in each of the three baskets of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as defined three decades ago.