

ROMANIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP
OF THE OSCE

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BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE
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OCTOBER 31, 2001

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OF THE OSCE**

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ROMANIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE OSCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2001

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The Commission met at 9:30 a.m. in Room 385, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, The Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Chairman, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Chairman; Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Co-Chairman; Hon. Robert B. Aderholt, Commissioner

Witnesses present: His Excellency Mircea Dan Geoana, Chairman-in-Office, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Sen. CAMPBELL. This OSCE hearing will be in session.

This morning we welcome Foreign Minister Geoana to the Commission in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]. The Minister met with the Commissioners at the beginning of 2001, and we have been in close contact as the events of this year have unfolded.

Mr. Minister, I appreciate the close working relationship that you have maintained with this Commission—a tradition we hope to continue with your Portuguese successor next year.

Romania has encountered many challenges and accomplished a great deal since assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE earlier this year, yet much remains to be done. Indeed, Romania's chairmanship will conclude as the international community faces a new set of challenges that affect every one of the 55 OSCE participating States.

It's my hope that "Operation Enduring Freedom" will bring enduring freedom to all of the countries in the vast OSCE region, including the countries of Central Asia. In this regard, I see the OSCE role in promoting democracy, human rights, and economic liberty, and the campaign to root out terrorism as complementary.

Americans are united and determined to see this war against terrorism in all of its forms succeed. The Helsinki Commission itself has faced serious disruption as a direct result of terrorism, but we will not be deterred. Erosion of our common commitment to human rights would only lead to greater instability, not less.

It will be essential to dissuade despots of any notion that we are abandoning our firm commitment to democracy and human rights. To do otherwise would imperil the very values and principles which terrorists seek to destroy. Paying lip service to human rights alone will not suffice.

As President Bush has said, it is important to distinguish between those who pursue legitimate political aspirations and terrorists. History has shown that the seeds of repression bear very poisonous fruit.

Mr. Minister, I appreciate your leadership in focusing the work of the OSCE on combating corruption and organized crime, as well as your strong support for the Southeastern Europe Cooperation Initiative's [SECI] center for combating transnational organized crime located in Bucharest.

Clearly there is a strong nexus between the operations of transnational criminal organizations and international terrorist organizations. Indeed, according to experts, terrorists frequently work together in the fields of drug trafficking and money laundering, and I strongly urge the OSCE participating States to redouble their efforts to pursue practical and cooperative fights of international crime and terrorism.

It's also our understanding that some terrorists themselves raise their money from international crime and international drug sales.

The past year has provided Romania with a unique opportunity to lead by example in implementation of its OSCE commitments during its chairmanship. Indeed, several of our Commissioners have followed developments in Romania for decades, and we appreciate your work to ensure that long-standing human rights concerns in Romania will be addressed by Bucharest.

In this regard, we look forward to continued action to overcome the legacy of the past, including anti-Semitism, while protecting the rights of all Romanian citizens, including the Roma as well as ethnic and religious minorities.

Mr. Minister, we wish you continued success in the closing and challenging days of Romania's chairmanship of the OSCE and your views on how to strengthen the OSCE process.

I'm pleased to yield to Co-Chairman Smith for any remarks he would have.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for convening this important hearing on Romania's leadership as Chairman of the OSCE. I join you in welcoming our friend, Foreign Minister Geoana, and look forward to his testimony.

The Commission has frequently held hearings to examine various aspects of the OSCE. In the past 2 months alone, we have held hearings which have examined police training issues in the OSCE region, U.S. policy toward the OSCE, and the efforts of the OSCE in resolving the situation in Moldova.

We have been fortunate at many of these events to hear directly from OSCE officials, including Mission Heads and the Representative of Freedom of the Media. I look forward to the insights that Minister Geoana, serving in the OSCE's most senior political position, can bring us this morning.

Minister Geoana, as you know, I, along with many other Commissioners, had several concerns about Romania's readiness to serve as the OSCE Chair-in-Office. Indeed, we wrote Secretary of State Albright to express those concerns back in 1999.

However, I have to say that I have been encouraged by your commitment, your leadership, and your engagement on the issues of relevance. Thank you for your skills. Romania has received high marks for its stewardship of the OSCE community. I particularly appreciate your initiative in spearheading OSCE meetings on trafficking and on the Roma.

In fact, being the top man or woman in the OSCE seems to bring greater and greater demands with each passing year, with the plethora of conflicts and crises that continually erupt in the OSCE region. Unfortunately, the events of September 11 have added to the challenges the OSCE community faces.

While I commend you for your own role in serving the OSCE community, I must express some disappointment about the situation in Romania itself. When we wrote to Secretary Albright in 1999, we did so in great measure because of human rights issues in your own country. The country that serves as the OSCE Chair should, in my view, lead by example.

Unfortunately, many problems we described in 1999 persist. Statues celebrating an executed war criminal stand on at least four pieces of public property. There has been no move at all to repeal Romania's criminal defamation law.

I am particularly concerned about the recent proposal by the Mayor of Piatr Neamt—a town which hosts an Antonescu statue, by the way—to create a walled, guarded ghetto for Roma. I welcome Prime Minister Nastase's condemnation of this outrageous plan, but the very fact that an elected official could offer such an idea to the public says a great deal about the climate of intolerance that Roma continue to face in Romania.

I am encouraged by the fact that the OSCE's Senior Advisor on Roma Issues, Nicolae Gheorghe, and Romani CRISS, one of the leading NGOs in Romania, are working to address these issues, and I hope your government will support them in their efforts.

Again, thank you for your leadership. I look forward to your statements that you make today, and we appreciate your taking the time to be with us.

**TESTIMONY OF HIS EXCELLENCY MIRCEA DAN GEOANA,
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE, ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Min. GEOANA. Thank you very much.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Please proceed, Mr. Minister.

Min. GEOANA. It's always a pleasure to be back. It's like coming home. I have to say that I, myself, as Chairman-in-Office, but also as a Foreign Minister and former Ambassador over here, I appreciate the long-term involvement and dedication of the Commission in being with us, giving us advice, praising us for doing good things, and also drawing our attention when we are still suffering from some legacies of the past.

It's always a privilege, and I would like to thank both the Chairman and the Co-Chairman for their leadership in the Commission.

I would like to present very briefly some things that we were able to achieve and some remaining pending issues during our chairmanship of the OSCE, and probably to give an overview of how we think the organization is moving, especially after the September 11 fundamental change in global affairs.

Then I will try to give some answers or I will be welcoming further questions about some situations in my own country, Romania.

When we took over the chairmanship, we wanted, first and foremost, to ensure that all OSCE participating States should continue to believe that our organization was addressing the issues of concern to them and their citizens in a more practical and action-oriented way.

Our objectives at the beginning of our chairmanship were that the OSCE should remain relevant and useful as an instrument for crisis management, conflict prevention, and post-conflict rehabilitation. It should remain a key body for promoting the rule of law and human rights, but that it should also strengthen its activity in other areas such as the economic and environmental dimension. Here I would like to stress how much we appreciate the advice of Senator Campbell in that regard.

I would also like to mention that we stressed at the beginning of our chairmanship that our organization should be prepared to cope with new security challenges, such as organized crime and corruption, international terrorism, as it proved to be the case after September 11, and, generically, extremism.

We are also concerned that the OSCE should pay more attention to regions which had been less in the international spotlight, such as the Caucasus and Central Asia. I would like to mention four specific issues which have taken much of our attention this year—Macedonia, Kosovo, corruption and organized crime, and, indeed, terrorism.

A few words on Macedonia. The situation in Macedonia has given us a clear lesson that conflict can still erupt unexpectedly. The situation has stabilized for now thanks to the concerted and intense efforts that the U.S., the EU, NATO, and the OSCE have taken together.

The NATO operation to disarm and disband the ethnic Albanian groups was a clear success, but there were—and there still are—worrying signs that some groups will try to delay the parliamentary process which would have thrown the whole process and the whole peace agreement in jeopardy.

I was in Skopje often myself or with the Secretary General of NATO, George Robertson, or Mr. Solana from the EU, and Ambassador Pardew as the U.S. Special Envoy. I am planning to go again, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Co-Chairman, next week, the 7th, trying, with my friends George Robertson and Javier Solana, to give a final push to the discussions or the debates in the Parliament in Kosovo for the final amendments to the Constitution to be passed, and for us to be able, as the OSCE, to get into the stage when confidence-building measures are really implemented and trying to help that society to come at peace with itself.

There are deep scars, there are deep wounds in that society, and I think our organization can and should do many things for that society to come back together as a truly multi-ethnic and tolerant and multi-religious society.

There are lots of things that need to be done. I am very proud to say that our organization was able to react faster than before in mobilizing additional monitors to help with the return of the authorities to the villages, and we have displayed and dispatched in the last couple of days some of our monitors, including police observers, in some pilot projects in five villages near Kumanovo.

I myself visited such villages when I was there 10 days ago, and I am optimistic that we'll be able to do a good job as we move forward.

We are also very closely working on something that the OSCE, as you know, Mr. Chairman, has developed a certain skill in doing, and that's basically training of multi-ethnic police forces. We have done a good job in Kosovo, and now, starting January 1, we'll be taking over the current police training which is done by the United States.

The OSCE will be taking practically over this operation January 1 in trying to help the Macedonian society building a new, more respected, and multi-ethnic police force. So this is something that we know you care about, and we are trying to give some answers to that.

I'll get now to Kosovo, because we are getting very close to the elections in this province, and we do believe that these elections on November 17 for self-governing institutions in Kosovo are probably the most important event of the year.

These elections must be inclusive if we want to see viable and sustainable institutions in a multi-ethnic Kosovo. Our organization has played an important role in organizing and supporting the voter registration process. More than 170,000 Serbs have registered on electoral lists, and a representative number of Serb political parties have registered as candidates.

Our main priority—our main challenge and our main concern today are to ensure that, on the day of the elections, the Kosovo Serbs and other minority groups will be actually coming to vote. This is something that we'll continue to need to encourage Belgrade, their turn to encourage the ethnic Serbs to show a strong turnout for the elections.

For our part, we are working with the UNMIK and KFOR on the security concerns raised by Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade, so that refugees and internally displaced persons feel they can return safely to their homes.

Among our many activities in Kosovo, I will mention again our work at the Kosovo Police Service School, which is training local police officers and trainers. We are now very proud to say that the first Kosovo police trainers of this service school graduated on August 1, and now they are training police cadets.

The school aims to provide police training in line with democratic standards for at least 4,000 locally recruited officers, including members of minority communities and women.

The long-term future and stability of Kosovo and all those who live there is still far from being certain, and we must strive for a working relationship between Belgrade and Pristina. The international community must keep making this point, both to the Albanian leaders in Kosovo and, equally, to the authorities in Belgrade.

Another topic of a priority to the OSCE, and for my own country, was—and still is—the issue of corruption and organized crime. We know how much this thing is of concern also to the Commission, and we are trying to put more energy into this subject.

Our chairmanship has consistently emphasized that corruption is a serious threat to the OSCE values, that corruption and illegal activity like money laundering, trafficking, and organized crime endanger not only our economic growth and sound development but also our security. We must pay particular attention to the links between organized crime and terrorist groups, particularly on the financing side.

The OSCE Economic Forum is mainly focused on transparency and good governance—indeed, a weak spot for many of our member states. OSCE can play an important part in stimulating the political will to develop and implement the necessary legislation, and promoting regional cooperation, strengthening civil society, and increasing civil participation in the governmental decision-making process. All of this can really contribute to good governance.

We have done a couple of projects in the field, and they are still going on with significant success. The OSCE presence in Albania, along with the World Bank and the European Commission, continues to provide direct advice and strategic planning on anti-corruption issues. The OSCE office in Armenia is coordinating the International Anti-Corruption Joint Task Force. Together with other OSCE missions in the Caucasus, they have built up a network of NGOs.

U.S. support and financial contributions to OSCE anti-corruption activities have been enormously valuable, and we are very grateful for the U.S. continued support for such important projects.

Concrete actions that we have been proposing could include promoting, the adoption and implementation of international legal instruments, and developing codes of conduct—a recommendation that the Economic Forum this year has put forward. Holding periodic consultations with partner institutions and organizations, like as the tripartite meeting on good governance last February with the Council of Europe and the UN.

Involving OSCE field missions in the Council of Europe's GRECO evaluations, under the Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative. And cooperating with the SECI Regional Center on combating cross-border crime that you know so well and you have supported constantly, and we have encouraged the SECI Center to make contact with the Central Asian law enforcement authorities.

This is something that I proposed to the leadership in Uzbekistan when I visited last week, and they seem interested in Central Asia and the Caucasus in the SECI experience and in cooperating with the SECI Center in activities against organized crime of a transregional nature.

We have focused, indeed, on something that is a great concern also to my country, and this is the matter of illegal trafficking of human beings. This is a plague. This is a growing business. This is something that we try to do a better job in fighting against.

Our chairmanship organized a regional conference in May this year on illegal trafficking. We had the privilege of having the Director of the FBI, other senior government and law enforcement representatives for Southeast Europe and EU countries. We agreed at that meeting on a couple of conclusions, priorities, and actions in order to fight together in a better way human trafficking.

I'm happy to say that when it comes to the SECI Center we have been able, with joint cooperation among the 11 countries taking part in our center, to crack down on a couple of important networks and criminals, including lady criminals, who are and were the key vectors of trafficking in our region.

Our police in Romania—I'm happy to report to you that we were able to crack down on a couple of such networks in the recent days. So I think that the value of this regional cooperation is starting to pay off.

A few words on terrorism. The September 11 attacks against the United States brought home, more than any other single act of terrorism, the dangers from international terrorism to freedom, humanity, and the security of the individual—values which the OSCE is committed to defend and uphold.

The OSCE condemned rigorously and vigorously the attacks on September 11, and we have fully supported the creation of a strong and broad international coalition against terrorism, and this is something that we'll continue to do.

But we also wanted to focus on some specific contribution that the OSCE can make in the international fight against terrorism. In my address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on September 20, I mentioned three areas where I believe the OSCE can bring added value.

First, making use of our political will and solidarity in committing to joint action, with a strong declaration on combating terrorism to be adopted at the Bucharest OSCE Ministerial the beginning of December.

Secondly, focusing our attention on addressing root causes, such as economic and social marginalization, which can be fertile ground for extremist ideologies, and fighting the gray zones of organized crime, including trafficking in people and arms.

Thirdly, acting as a bridge between regional initiatives to set common priorities.

Cooperation between OSCE states can only be truly effective if all states strengthen or introduce anti-terrorist legislation, including European-wide powers of arrest and extradition of suspects.

A common legal framework is essential for the exchange of information and expertise between our law enforcement agencies. The appointment of an OSCE Police Advisor, an older British idea which is supported by most OSCE states, would be the first step in promoting this kind of active cooperation.

I have to report that I am today more optimistic that the idea of a Police Advisor at the OSCE will become a reality in the very near future.

The Bishkek conference on terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime in December provides a good opportunity for us to review the state of play on signature and ratification of the various UN conventions on terrorism and to strengthen police and judicial systems in the democratic context. Our hope is that the Central Asians can draw on the experience of other countries in counterterrorism.

We have now set up a task force in Vienna to look at concrete steps the participating States can and should take in coordinating our efforts to combat terrorism with the aim of developing an OSCE-wide action plan against terrorism for adoption at the Bucharest Ministerial in December.

Now a few words on human rights. You know how much our organization and your Commission have been at the core activity of the human rights since the inception of the OSCE in 1975. We believe, as Co-Chairman Smith has said, that also Romania has led also with the power of example, and we are taking these things very seriously.

We have spent many years and vast resources in the OSCE on crisis management and rebuilding societies after conflict. It might be going too far to say that if these basic rights had been respected fully we would not have witnessed the vicious conflicts of the last past 10 years.

I'm convinced that results would not have been so catastrophic or have required such massive international intervention if free and democratic systems had been in place.

I also made the point in my presentation at the Permanent Council in Vienna that the current fight against terrorism should not be—should not be a pretext for leadership in some countries of the OSCE to be used as a pretext in cracking down their legal secular opposition.

I made this point in Tashkent to the President of Uzbekistan. I made this point in Turkmenistan and the other countries I visited. There is a significant democratic deficit in these countries.

I have also recognized, Mr. Chairman, that we also have to put more resources in assisting these countries on the economic and security fronts, but this should not and will not be done at the expense of the human dimension of our democratic values. They are universal, and all our member states should abide by those standards.

Cooperation with international organizations was another point of interest for our chairmanship, and this was the principle which was governing our activity, working in close synergy with other organizations, and also trying to have a practical division of labor, recognizing where other organizations have more comparative or competitive advantage, and also asking them to recognize when the OSCE has such advantages.

I think that the best example of cooperation is Macedonia. I think what we've been able to do together with our friends in NATO and EU and us, the OSCE, is really an example of a true new spirit of cooperation among key organizations. The same thing applies, of course, with our relationship with our friends at the Council of Europe, and the other more specialized agencies, such as the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration.

Last few words on the future direction of our organization and also how we see the last couple of months of our chairmanship. Our priorities for the OSCE Bucharest Ministerial are to set the agenda for the next few years in certain areas.

We are aiming for the following results: strong declarations on terrorism and on illegal trafficking, appointment of an OSCE Police Advisor, adoption of an OSCE action plan on Roma/Sinti issues. I'm grateful that you recognize the efforts of our chairmanship and of my country in organizing, for the first time ever in the history of the CSCE/OSCE, an international conference on the Roma/Sinti issue.

It was done in Bucharest. I think it was a success. Now we have to really follow through with practical actions. I'm convinced that a Portuguese chairman-in-office next year will follow on some ideas that we have been able to adopt in Bucharest.

Strengthened commitments to assist with quality refugee return, and this is something which is of paramount importance in our fight against global terrorism. As you did, I visited many refugee camps in many corners of the OSCE space. The situation is dramatic, Mr. Chairman.

There are youngsters with basically no hopes for the future. That's the place where organized crime is developing. That's the place where including even more difficult activities related even to our fight against terrorism can be related to. This is something that we have to put more energy into.

And also, we are aiming and adopting a substantive declaration on Southeast Europe, mainly after the very successful regional conference of the Stability Pact, which was held in our capital city, Bucharest, last week.

And, finally, we'd like to see an agreement on institutional strengthening of the organization, and I think that the time has come in this new global environment to look closer at the legal capacity for the OSCE.

And here I'm making a personal plea to you as important leaders of the U.S. Congress, and also our friends in the U.S. administration, to move forward on this subject. We know it is a complicated one, but I think the time has come for us to look at the legal capacity of our organization.

I think that if we want to build sustainable democracy in our part of the world, Southeast Europe, it is time to look for a strategy for the region as a whole. The time for ad hoc localized solutions is past. The syndrome of dependency on the major powers cannot continue indefinitely.

The countries of our region must start to exercise responsibility themselves by looking to their own resources and by developing healthy regional cooperation systems. This is not an overnight process, and the international community must remain engaged. But we should also be pushing now for more effective self-governance in line with OSCE standards.

I have highlighted just a few of the points of interest. I will make two comments, and then if you want me I can go and answer some of the specific remarks which were made in the two interventions of the Chairman and the Co-Chairman, or, if you want, any other questions I am ready to respond.

I was in Moscow last week, and I had a long conversation with Minister Ivanov, who by the way will be visiting Washington in the next couple of days. And I think that my conversations with other capitals of the OSCE—big capitals and smaller capitals—are indicating to us that now this new atmosphere in global politics, and the fact that also Russia is cooperating in its global fight against terrorism, could also be an opportunity for the OSCE really to go over some of the difficulties we encountered in the past.

I'm today more optimistic that the ministerial in Bucharest will be a more successful one than the previous ministerial. And I think that we are really having a chance of injecting more energy, more visibility, and a higher profile of our organization as an important organization of the trans-Atlantic community.

I think it's a chance we should not miss. I think that we should not compromise our principles for the sake of such an endeavor. But I think we should play all our political energy, all our diplomatic skills, and all our wisdom, common wisdom, to try to make full use of this new envi-

ronment in the relationship between not only Russia but some also Central Asian and Caucasian member states, and the rest of our member states.

This is basically the aim of the ministerial in Bucharest, to really start thinking about the future of our organization. And as I mentioned in a couple of speeches, including the speech I had in Paris when we met the last time at the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, I think that sooner rather than later we should be thinking of a new OSCE summit to be held as soon as possible.

I think the time has come to draw the line and see what this organization can and should do for the security of our space in the 21st century.

I will stop here with my intervention. I have prepared and distributed a prepared statement. And I would like to have your indications on how you want us to proceed. I can go further in responding to some specific points, or I can answer some of your questions.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you, Mr. Minister. We'll be joined probably by several other of the members of the Commission who will be coming and going, and so we'll ask some questions in about 5-minute rounds, so we can each have an opportunity.

Thank you very much for that very detailed presentation. And your complete testimony will be included in the record.

You have asked the OSCE Permanent Council to develop an action plan to combat terrorism to be adopted at the ministerial at Bucharest. And you mentioned—and I certainly agree with you on several of the points that you feel are important—developing the political will, focusing on the root causes of terrorism, and bridging some common priorities.

I think those are all really important. Like all long-term things, though, they have to be taken in the abstract a little bit, too.

Do you have any particular concrete steps that you believe the OSCE can take as an organization to combat international terrorism?

And, secondly, how do you envision the OSCE interacting with other organizations or agencies in combating terrorism?

Min. GEOANA. Thank you very much. This is a subject too much already in our focus. We have proposed in my presentation in the Permanent Council a couple of practical steps to be taken by our organization.

First, we have requested all our member states to have a national review of their domestic legislation, including the ones related to financing, including the ones related to freezing assets of suspect organizations or entities, including looking at the bank supervision, and also trying to have a more uniform legal framework across the board.

And we have really welcomed what EU has done, but I think that EU is a necessary step, but it's only encompassing a portion of our continent. And I think that working also closer with the UN and the OSCE and EU I think we can do a good job in having a more uniform legal framework across the board. There should be no escape for anybody trying to hide from the rule of law and from the tough action of our law enforcement agencies.

Secondly, we are proposing an exchange of information and expertise, and also asking our field missions to put this topic at the very forefront of their agenda on the spot. And also, we are also looking closer to border monitoring and policing, because they are also something that relate to the capacity of our member states to fight against terrorism.

We also have paid greater attention to what we call the gray zones. There are lot of what we call frozen conflicts areas, gray zones. But basically they are entities which are—consider themselves as basically independent from the state that they belong to normally and legally. There are numerous such places in the OSCE space, especially in the former Soviet space.

And there I think, together with the friends in the Russian Federation or CIS or other countries in the region, I think we should try to find together some solutions for those areas not to become black holes.

Some of them are already platforms of organized crime, illegal trafficking, and they might be even related to financing, directly or indirectly, of some even worse situations. So this is something that I believe we should try to make a stronger effort in doing.

And also, in assessing the risks and putting more energy in our programs dealing with the judicial, law enforcement, and intelligence consultation, and also have proposed a comprehensive interagency and interregional ministerial conference, including the Ministries of Justice, Domestic Affairs, and Intelligence agencies. And I'm optimistic that sometime next year that the response of the member states will be positive.

So the OSCE is uniquely positioned, together with the UN, to have also intraregional and interregional cooperation. So we have to go across the board.

I also would like to come back again to the SECI Center in Bucharest whom I care about because it's based in our capital city, but also because this is something that you have greatly supported along the years.

We are also trying to use this center, and we are now looking into the possibility of adding some anti-terrorist components to our already quiet successful cooperation in fighting organized crime, because it is obvious that there is a relationship between various layers of organized crime, financing of these activities, and global terrorism.

I would also like to make the point again that we should try to avoid, to the maximum extent possible, the temptation that some leaders and some agencies in some countries of organization might face in, again, cracking down their legal, legitimate leg secular opposition.

Fighting terrorism is a noble and normal goal but should not be used as an excuse in really limiting basic individual freedoms, and also already the weak opposition that we are—an NGO community that we are seeing in some member states.

So this is briefly where we stand. We have asked a task force to be created in the OSCE, and I'm very happy to report that the Danes have taken over this task force in the OSCE. They are quite renowned for their meticulous and hardworking approach, and they will be producing some concrete actions to be adopted at the Bucharest ministerial of the OSCE in early December.

Sen. CAMPBELL. I think we both know, all of us know, that a number of participating States haven't been in compliance with their OSCE commitments to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. So I'm glad you spoke to that a little bit.

In fact, some of the states have repressed their citizens under the guise of combating terrorism, as you said. I can remember just as recently as couple of years ago that Russia was using their – some of the things that they were doing in Chechnya, they were saying, “Well, that’s because we’re trying to control the Chechen terrorists.”

So the word “terrorist” has taken on a new meaning since—particularly since September 11, and I worry, as you do, that it may be used sometimes as an avenue for more repression instead of less of basic fundamental human rights and freedoms.

What is the current operational capability at the SECI? You mentioned this a couple of times. I know that America is participating and is ramping up our participation. In fact, I just lost my Deputy Chief of Staff who you met when you were in visiting me a couple of months ago, Mike Russell. Mike has been transferred to the Treasury Department because of his expertise in combating money laundering and counterfeiting.

And he kept me abreast quite regularly when he was with me about the SECI Center, but I’d like to know what its role is going to be in combating terrorism, if you could give me a couple of specific examples.

Minister GEOANA. We made a couple of proposals. First of all, let me say again that the center is operational. It is operational. It started working, and the fact that we are able, amongst 11 countries of Southeast Europe, to exchange and share intelligence was a tremendous additional tool in our fight against organized crime, transborder organized crime.

And the first networks of drug traffickers, of human traffickers, and arms smugglers already were decapitated. We’ve made significant arrests, not only in Romania but in some other countries in the region. It’s far from being perfect, but I would say this is probably the most positive example of regional cooperation that I’ve seen in Southeast Europe in years.

And I’m very grateful, again, for the support we received from the U.S. Congress, from yourselves, but also from various U.S. agencies, and also European agencies, and member states of European Union, too.

Secondly, we have made a couple of proposals in using our center for broadening its scope and progressively reach also the dimension of international terrorism. This is not an easy proposition because of the complexity of the fight.

We have been working together with some of the U.S. law enforcement agencies. We’ve been working with our friends in the European Union, and also with the other intelligence and law enforcement bodies of our region. And our ambition is that when we have this meeting next year of the Justice, Home Affairs, and Intelligence agencies, to come together with a more concrete plan.

We have also—my country has proposed to NATO a very interesting operation, which is already functioning, which is the South East European Common Assessment Paper, SEECAP. This is the most comprehensive survey of the threats to the security of our region, and we are now working also with NATO in trying to see how we can work closer together.

Secondly, we are also working and trying to get closer to EuroPol. So we are trying to hook up our center with the other organizations. And next week the President of Poland, President Kwasniewski, will be

organizing in Warsaw a major conference of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Southeast Europe, down to Turkey, including Russia.

And this will be dedicated to our fight against terrorism, and the SECI Center will be present there, and also it will be made a reference on how some other regional similar activities can hook up with our center. So we are really becoming a quite powerful instrument.

Again, because of the sensitivity of the subject and the fact that not only Ministers of the Interior or Police or Customs, we also need to have other intelligence agencies working with us. There is a certain sensitivity, but we are working very aggressively in that direction, and I think our center will be able to give an answer also to the problem of terrorism in our region and beyond.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you. Let me yield to my Co-Chairman, Mr. Smith, but also to thank you for particularly—something that's been of particular interest to me, and that is the action plan on the Roma that you are going to present at Bucharest; and, secondly, to tell you that the return of refugees—many times the refugees themselves—you mentioned this—but they are the people that need help the most, because in many cases they're the ones who do not have jobs, do not have educations, do not have a future, do not have, literally, any hope.

And when they come from the refugee camps it's even worse than before they left. It seems to me that's fertile ground for recruiting into religious causes of one sort or another, so I commend you for also being sensitive to that.

Mr. Smith, your turn.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Minister for his kind words and expressions of solidarity with the United States, especially in light of the horrific 9/11 events and the ongoing pain.

Many in my own district suffered loss. At least 50 people from my district died in the World Trade Center. The ongoing problem with anthrax has manifested itself in my own district as well—in Hamilton Township. The postal facility in Trenton is in my district as well. Having asked for more than a week, just yesterday we got the news that 44 other feeder stations will be checked for anthrax. We do not know how far that contagion of anthrax and cross-contamination may need to go.

So, the issue of terrorism certainly is paramount on the minds of my own constituents, of Americans. Again, your comments are very much appreciated.

One issue that we've worked on very vigorously on this Commission as you well know—and you've done it personally as well—is the issue of human trafficking, which continues to be a scourge. It particularly affects, in a very dire way, women and children, but mostly young women who are trafficked and forced into prostitution.

I've been privy to, and I've read, as has our staff, some very damaging allegations about police monitors and their very dishonorable activities vis-a-vis trafficked women, protection of locations where women have been trafficked, as well as the utilization and the exploitation of themselves by police monitors themselves.

My understanding is that some of this has occurred in Bijeljina in Bosnia. The reports, which make very sobering reading, made it very clear that the investigators are as profoundly unwelcome as the traf-

fickers. There have been threats about what might happen to one's car if their activities are exposed. Others have told of investigators being followed, in an effort to intimidate.

It's my understanding that some IPTF police monitors have been repatriated, but there is no guarantee that justice will be pursued when they get repatriated. The monitors in question included Romanians. You might be able to shed some light on whether or not there will be prosecutions levied against those who have exploited women in this way.

I'd also like to ask you about Uzbekistan. I know that on October 22nd you met with the President, the Prime Minister, and several other high-ranking officials in Uzbekistan. Your meetings were just a few days after religious activist Ravshan Haidov died in police custody. As I know you know, Shovriq Rusimorodov, a political activist, had also died in the custody of the state in July. A large number of both religious and political activists are being tortured in Uzbek prisons.

Were you able to raise those specific cases with the Uzbek officials that you met with?

What was their reaction?

Also, if you could, spend a moment on Chechnya. I know that there's a reinvigorated assistance mission that was deployed in July, or agreed to in July.— And this success is a credit to you and to the OSCE. Perhaps you can shed some light on that situation.

We have had numerous hearings and fact-finding missions. Frank Wolf, one of our Commissioners, has been to Chechnya, which continues to be an open sore that we hope could be healed. What role does the OSCE play vis-a-vis Chechnya? What kind of access do your monitors have with regards to human rights activities on either side of that ongoing conflict?

Finally, concerning Belarus, following last month's flawed presidential elections which we all know failed to meet the OSCE standards, where do we go from here with regards to Belarus and our activities there?

Sen. CAMPBELL. Is that all, one question?

Min. GEOANA. Thank you very much. I am making a virtual trip of the OSCE. The matter of human trafficking, I will address one word about what we're trying to do in Romania as well. We have, in the Cabinet, adopted a draft law regarding human trafficking. It's probably one of the most modern and far-reaching legislations of this sort in the region, and I'm confident that our Parliament will be passing this legislation quite fast.

Also, I took part with Foreign Minister Fischer of Germany in a very successful seminar of the OSCE dedicated to human trafficking in Berlin 2 weeks ago. You know that in order for this industry to flourish at such a speed, there is a need not only for supply and demand but also for a network, criminal networks.

Sometimes such networks are criminal gangs. Some of them were dismantled, as I reported to you. And if you want I can brief you separately on some of the specific cases. Also, benefitting from the "benevolent" or half-closed eyes of some officials, including sometimes international monitors or people, especially in some specific cases in the Western Balkans.

We are also alerted to the news and the reports that such activities might be also being supported, directly or indirectly, by some police officers from some important member states of the organization. There was some indication that—also, too, about police officers serving over there might have been engaged in such activities.

We immediately conducted an internal investigation from our Ministry of the Interior. We had a special team going over there looking at how our people are doing and also on the broader context.

You're right, Mr. Chairman, that sometimes having access to real information is not that easy, but we have basically—we are continuing back home to have our domestic analysis of the behavior of our police officers. And if it will be proven to really have gone beyond the law, they will be punished according to our legislation.

We also hope this will be the case in some other situations, because this is a matter of concern to our whole community.

Secondly, about Uzbekistan. I was there. I've met with the president, the foreign minister, as you mentioned. I've raised our concerns, and our concerns in terms of the human dimension are numerous in Uzbekistan, and I'm sorry to say in some other Central Asian countries.

I was sending the message to the Uzbek officials that they need to make more progress towards democratization. And as we welcome Uzbekistan's strong support for this coalition against terrorism, this is not in any way a reason for us not to continue to press, and for them not to continue to work together with us towards a more open society in that country.

I made this thing very clear. I raised my concerns about the justice system, the freedom of religion, the freedom of expression, and some of the practices in their justice system. Some of the people detained by police are subject to torture, and also that government censorship of the media is also something that is quite frequent.

I also met with a group of NGOs and people representing the independent media over there, and they expressed the same concerns to us. So we've done this. We'll continue to do this. Again, as I mentioned, we highly appreciated the strong commitment and support of the government to our common fight against terrorism.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Could you yield briefly? Were you able to bring up Mr. Haidov's case, since he had been—

Min. GEOANA. I've raised specific cases—

Sen. CAMPBELL. Good.

Min. GEOANA.—Nominally, and also I have left a full list of cases of concern which were basically prepared by ODIHR, our Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Was there any response back?

Min. GEOANA. We hope that through our mission we'll be getting some response back from them.

Chechnya is the next subject. Of course we were pleased to see the assistance group returning. I'm very much indebted to one of our diplomats, Ambassador Cornera, who took this responsibility.

Our assistance group in Chechnya is today at its full operational strength as it was approved by the mandate in the Permanent Council. It is not a large group. It's only six people. But also we are working very closely with some of the Council of Europe's people on the ground.

We were focusing our activities over there in the stabilization of our presence in Chechnya, implementation of rehabilitation programs, and the programs aimed at improving the situation of internally-displaced persons, nursery schools for preschool age children, medical rehabilitation for IDP children, extended aid classes, are just a few examples.

We tried to give some relief and some assistance to the people in need over there, especially because some other international agencies—because of the security situation—are still concerned in involving themselves fully.

Of course we are monitoring the overall human rights situation in Chechnya. We have received in our mission large numbers of visitors and inquiries about human rights violations and property issues, including some things related with the Russian army, and we are working in close coordination with the Office of Mr. Kalimanov, the Russian representative on human rights, and also, as I mentioned, the Council of Europe field representative in Znamenskoye.

Our group produces reports on human rights violations, which are submitted not only to the local or the republican or federal authorities but also with the NGO community and also with the other organizations present in the region, including some UN agencies.

We have been dealing also with the situation of the working conditions of our staff, and also the security arrangements. We are moving our people with some concern to their security. And, as you know, the Russian Ministry of Justice is providing such security for people.

So far we had a good cooperation with the Russian bodies at the federal/local levels. And I think that our mission, even if it's not big in numbers, I think has played a positive role in creating some sense of normalcy. And we hope that the current discussions between Moscow and some leaders in Chechnya will continue, and hopefully this will be something that will develop in the period ahead.

Now, on Belarus, Mr. Chairman, as you know, the elections in September dominated our activity in this country. Our concern was to see that this should represent an important step in the democratic transition of Belarus towards European democracy.

We were, of course, concerned and we expressed this concern that despite all the efforts of the OSCE Assistance Monitoring Group and the pressure from the international community, the electoral process and campaign in Belarus did not meet OSCE standards. We concluded that these elections did not allow the correct expression of the opinions of the electorate.

And we also have said that we have seen a single candidate of the democratic opposition, and at least, in nominal terms, this was the first time when I have seen an opponent to Mr. Lukashenko showing up in the elections. So this was a small, still timid, but, nevertheless, encouraging sign.

Nevertheless, the international observers noted the fact that slowly there is an emergence of civil society. It's, of course, under strong control from the authorities, and we do believe that we should continue to do our work and saying quite openly things that do not work well in Belarus but also trying to engage with the civil society and the groups struggling for democracy.

The head of mission is coming to the end of his tour over there, and we have received a proposition also from Germany to have somebody to replace Mr. Wieck, whom I say, again, we greatly appreciate his dedi-

cation and work. He is not a very popular character in Minsk with the authorities, but he has done, indeed, a tremendous job for pushing for a more open society in Belarus.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Are you finished, Chris?

Mr. SMITH. Yes. I have more, but—

Sen. Campbell. Okay. Mr. Aderholt, did you have some questions?

Mr. ADERHOLT. Yes. I just want to follow up with a quick question. Thank you for being here. When you were talking about Chechnya just a few minutes ago—could you talk a little bit about the actual, as closely as possible, the number of monitors that are actually present there, and also some of their regular activities that take place.

Min. GEOANA. As I mentioned, our assistance group is small. This was the mandate that we received from our organization. There are only six people. We also have a couple of other people working with the Council of Europe, and I think taking into account the relatively limited number of our monitors over there they have managed to do a pretty impressive job so far.

I am receiving reports of the numbers of inquiries and meetings they have with the civilian population over there in terms of some restitution problems, some legal difficulties they are facing.

Also, we have done, as I mentioned, a pretty good job in trying to get some relief and assistance, especially for the IDP camps, internally-displaced person camps. I visited some of those camps when I was in Chechnya, and I have to say that the situation is really very serious. And I think we have done a pretty good job in that.

Of course, our impact is still limited. We have to recognize that. But I stress again that the fact that we are able to return—the fact that we have reasonably good cooperation with the Russian authorities, and also that we are regaining the trust of the local population, that the international community is there to help, to assist, is something that we can consider a success. It's still limited, I recognize, but it's an important step in the right direction.

Thank you.

Mr. ADERHOLT. That's all I have.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Thank you.

At the Commission's last hearing, Mr. Minister, the former head of the OSCE mission in Bosnia, Ambassador Bob Barry, said the OSCE had a comparative advantage over other international organizations regarding civilian policing, police monitoring, police training.

He also went on to say that if there was a weakness, it was that the judicial systems are not functioning. First of all, is the OSCE doing anything to try to establish better judicial systems?

And, secondly, another gentleman who we met with, General Joe Ralston, who I'm sure you know from NATO, he gave us a tour of the OSCE police school in Kosovo. He believed the academy worked very well and would be a good model for police reform in Bosnia. Do you think that OSCE should take the lead in police monitoring and training in Bosnia rather than the United Nations?

Min. GEOANA. Thank you very much, and we appreciate and we are grateful for your personal involvement, Mr. Senator, in this field. We discussed about this subject also in Paris when we last met, and also it is something of great interest to myself and our organization.

I say again that the OSCE has developed a significant capacity in assisting with the training of multi-ethnic police forces. We are successful. I was with Joe Ralston in Skopje 20 days ago, and he also raised the thing with me that what we have done in Kosovo, what we are now starting to do in Macedonia, is a true example of success of organization in this respect.

We are also creating a working group dedicated to this very subject in Vienna, and I'm convinced that the OSCE police advisor unit, which is now created inside the Secretariat of the OSCE in Vienna, and also what I hope to be the senior police advisor of the OSCE to come soon, will be another important step in that direction.

I also would say that a functioning judiciary is one of the top priorities of the mandates of our field presences of all our missions in the OSCE, and we have developed tremendous programs in host countries in improving legislation and support for their judicial systems.

When it comes to the multi-ethnic police force, I would also probably say that the most successful operation so far, which was not noticed that much, was what we managed to do in southern Serbia on very short notice. And, of course, when there is success it gets noticed.

In numbers, only 95 police officers we trained have Serbian and Albanian ethnic backgrounds, and I think that, you know, we are able to show that we can also do things on the spot. We also have done good work in Croatia with the police monitoring group, and, as you mentioned yourself, Senator, also what we have done in Kosovo.

Now, when it comes to Bosnia, we are examining the issue of deploying a civilian police force in Bosnia. I'm convinced that the OSCE can do more in this field. The only one thing we should reflect on is to find convenient ways for financing such activities on the one side, and on the other side to see if our eventual greater role in Bosnia would also be something that our friends at the UN, because they are the leading agency, and also our colleagues and friends at EU, because they also have some ideas in that respect, will come to a common conclusion.

I want to say, again, as I mentioned in our previous conversations, that I will be pleading for an OSCE more significant role in Bosnia. It's premature to say which will be the outcome of our efforts, but I'm raising this thing constantly in Brussels, and I hope to raise this thing with the Secretary General of the UN in the next couple of weeks when I'll be visiting New York and discussing our future common activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Let me move on to some institutional matters. I was going to mention some of the problems we've heard with the police in Macedonia, but I do not want to run out of time before I get to several other issues.

You've been a very active minister. In the light of your experience as the OSCE's Chair-in-Office, do you feel the annual rotation of that position is in the best interest of the organization? You've taken the lead on an awful lot of issues, and it seems to me that sometimes a year isn't very long to promote some of the activities that a chairman would be interested in doing.

Min. GEOANA. Thank you for the question. Sometimes a Chairman-in-Office at the end of one year is so exhausted that—

Sen. CAMPBELL. You want to get out.

Min. GEOANA.—He or she would like to get out. At the same time, it's true that if you want to be consistent, continuity is also an important thing. We are trying, together with Mr. Kubis, our Secretary General of the OSCE, to work out a solution which will not dramatically change the current arrangement, because it will be difficult to change the current procedure, but to create inside the Secretariat of the OSCE in Vienna a small unit of advisors who would be able to give such practical advice to any Chairman-in-Office.

So, basically, instead of trying to look into if one year is long enough or short enough, we are trying to put together a pool of experts who would be put at the disposal of that specific Chair-in-Office and not rely only to the exclusive resources of his or her foreign ministry or diplomatic service or national capabilities.

So we are trying to ensure continuity through knowledge, and I think that this might be probably a good step in answering the issue that you have raised, Senator. This is something we are working on, and I'm confident this will be accepted by all members states. So, to really have some advisors to the Chairman-in-Office who will be professionals from the OSCE itself.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Well, as it is now, as I understand it, the chair does have some decision-making capacity under the troika of the last, the current, and the future chairs. What would the relationship between this advisor's group be and the—

Min. GEOANA. The troika.

Sen. CAMPBELL.—The troika.

Min. GEOANA. They will basically be working with the Chairman-in-Office primarily. But as you know, there is a division of labor between the members of the troika. The incoming chairman is also taking care of some of the specific activities one year before. So, sort of a warm-up for the next year.

And also, the outgoing chair is also taking care of some activities. So some activities are also taken by the troika itself.

When I visit, let's say, Central Asia or Chechnya, I always go with the troika. So this group of advisors will be related mainly to the Chairman-in-Office. But if the Chairman-in-Office will deem appropriate, this expertise could also be given to the other members of the troika.

Sen. CAMPBELL. That group of advisors, are those going to be paid positions?

Min. GEOANA. Sure.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Well, since the establishment of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, there have been a number of suggestions of establishing more high-level positions within the OSCE. And I assume that means highly paid or at least—at least paid, and that we've seen proposals for high-level positions on everything from gender issues to the rights of children to displaced persons, and so on.

I have to tell you, I would be a little bit concerned if we also have a list of advisors who would also be all salaried, too. How many advisors are you talking about that would be on that group?

Min. GEOANA. Not more than two or three. This will be something within our current logic that will continue to abide, which is a zero growth budget policy. And this will be something for the Secretariat and the Chairman-in-Office to work with the current budget.

Also, something that I have not reported to you is that our chairmanship was able to resolve, in a satisfactory way, a very difficult debate on the scale of contributions. This was something that is always sensitive to all our members states, big or small, rich or poor, but I think we've come with a good solution.

We are very prudent in terms of our expenditures. I think that our organization is doing a good job with a relatively small budget. It is not our interest to grow this organization into a huge bureaucracy. We want to be efficient. We want to be streamlined.

But also we want to put our expertise and our resources where basically needed. Strengthening the Chairman-in-Office capability to act in a more efficient way will be something that will benefit our organization and not putting pressure on our budget.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, as you know, there has been a very serious crackdown in Azerbaijan with more than a half a dozen writers having been convicted of insulting public officials. In fact, the OSCE representative on freedom of the media, along with his counterparts from the UN and the Organization of American States, have repeatedly called for criminal defamation laws and insult laws to be repealed.

Unfortunately, Romania has yet to repeal its own laws which criminalize defamation and prohibit offending public authorities or insulting public officials.

I would just note as a lawmaker myself, and I'm sure Ben has this—as the Chairman of our Commission, has the same problem. I get insulted every day and twice on Sunday.

(Laughter.)

Sen. CAMPBELL. That comes with the job.

Mr. SMITH. It comes with the job, whether it's merited or not. Perhaps you could shed some light on the Azerbaijan situation, and also whether or not Romania's Parliament and government is intending to repeal that part of their criminal code.

It's my understanding that Articles 205, 206, 238, and 239, are those that would be prudent to repeal.

Allow me to focus for a brief moment on the issue of minority faiths. One vestige of the Ceausescu regime and in other dictatorships throughout the world has been this often onerous hurdle of registration. It is used very often to keep certain organizations and groups out from forming or at least operating as a legal entity.

We had hearings on this and noted with a great deal of concern the Russian Duma's passage of its registration law, seeing it as a prelude to fencing certain religious organizations and groups, religious organizations outside of the officially recognized perimeter.

Jehovah's Witnesses have had a particularly harsh time, as we know, in Romania. Members who may object to service in the military, for example, can be imprisoned for their conscientious objection to military service, since their group is not officially registered as a church. So there's a "catch 22."

These religious believers who refuse to serve in the military are acting out of a pacifist impulse, and certainly if it's a bona fide religious pacifism the stance ought to be respected. Again, I was hoping you could shed some light on what your government is doing to ensure compli-

ance with the '89 Vienna Concluding Document, which states that governments are obligated to grant communities of believers the right to register. Perhaps you can give some particular emphasis to the Jehovah's Witnesses situation.

Also, could you briefly touch on your recent meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. It appears that the Russian Government is on track to remove its CFE Treaty-limited military equipment from Moldova, in accordance with the agreement reached at the 1999 OSCE summit in Istanbul.

However, the Russian Government has also expressed some dissatisfaction with the OSCE process of late. For example, too much emphasis on human rights, too much emphasis from their point of view on countries in the former Soviet Union, and suggesting the OSCE concentrates too much on human rights to the detriment of economic issues. That's a song we've heard many times before in our bilaterals with the Russians and the Soviets. Why do not we talk economic issues and not human rights issues?

Finally, if you could address the plans for the human dimension implementation meetings in Warsaw. There is some concern—and this primarily has been expressed to me by members of our staff—that we're spending less time, not more, on this part of our proceedings. The meeting used to be a 3-week focus, and now it's been narrowed down to about 9 days.

Certainly, the human rights portfolio and the humanitarian issues have not diminished.. Perhaps, you could offer us some insight as to why and whether or not that meeting might be expanded.

Min. GEOANA. Thank you very much. I had a stopover in Baku on my way to Uzbekistan, and I talked, again, with the Foreign Minister. We constantly raised the matter of concern to leadership of that country. There are still problems, but also recently there was an amnesty for a group of journalists in Azerbaijan, so ODIHR has sent out a letter recognizing this effort on behalf of President Aliyev. We are continuing to work and press on the issues of interest.

Getting back to Romania, as you are already aware, our government has basically sent to Parliament a draft law which includes also the modification of the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. So basically two instruments dealing with criminal offenses.

We also think that our proposals and the draft language, which is now under consideration at the Judicial Commission of the Romanian Senate, also, when it comes to Articles 205 and 206, paragraph 1 in each case, are also bringing a satisfactory answer to the matter of insult, calumny, including when it comes to journalists.

So we are confident that this will—we hope will bring a satisfactory conclusion to this matter. And also, in terms of Article 238, this will be—basically be deleted, and also—we are also working on Article 239.

So we are quite optimistic that this new draft law will become acting—it will be enacted by our Parliament and will have finally responded to some of the questions and concerns raised by this Commission, and also by some other friends in Europe.

When it comes to the minority religious groups, I think that by and large we have done a decent job. When it comes to the draft law on the religious denominations, which was drafted a couple of years ago, we basically—this project—this draft law was withdrawn from the Parliament.

We listened to some of the advice of our friends, including in the Commission, that this law needed more careful consideration. We also are looking very seriously at the Jehovah's Witnesses matter.

We also had from our judicial system, the Court of Supreme Justice in Romania, there was an action introduced by the Jehovah's Witnesses in Romania, and this is a final decision of the Supreme Court in Romania. So now we are getting down to the administrative procedures in registration according to our law of this religious denomination.

And we also had the State Secretary for Religious Affairs, Mr. Tanase. He was in October over here, and he had a meeting with the World Council of the Jehovah's Witnesses. And we invited a group of the legal experts from this organization to visit with us, and I think we'll be able to straighten out all the remaining legal and bureaucratic procedures.

We, of course, will comply to the decision of Supreme Court of Justice in Romania. So I think that this is, I would say, a positive resolve of this situation.

Speaking of my meeting with Minister Ivanov, we have recognized the fact that in some cases the Russian Federation has in the last couple of months accelerated the process of withdrawal of some of their forces and troops and munitions and weaponry, according to the Istanbul commitments. And we welcome this, and I take this opportunity to welcome this again.

Of course, there are other things that need to be done, but by and large it seems there is a movement in that direction.

Traditionally, Russia has accused the OSCE and the Chairman-in-Office of this organization over the last couple of years that, indeed, the OSCE would be putting too much emphasis on the former Soviets' space, so what they call the geographical imbalance of our policies, and also the fact that we are putting almost exclusive emphasis on the human dimension and basically not paying enough attention to the economic, environmental, and security dimensions of organization.

I have made the following point. I recognize that when it comes, let's say, to Central Asia, our involvement in the economic, environmental, and, to a certain extent, even the security dimensions, we have basically not done enough. And I made this self-criticism publicly in Vienna, because I was in Central Asia myself and they were talking about Afghanistan and the risk of Islamic fundamentalists, and probably we have not paid enough attention to them.

Having said that, I also have said to our Russian colleagues, and also to the leaders of countries in that situation, that we will try to do more on the security front, on the economic and environmental fronts, but not—and I repeat not—at the expense of the human dimension.

So my point is that we should do more on the economic and security fronts, but also try to do more, and it will be something that will be linked with our eventual assistance on economic and security fronts to their progress—tangible, concrete, demonstrable progress on the human dimension.

So it's not a change of policy. It's a change of emphasis. I think we should try to invest more in the security and economic well-being, especially of the nations in Central Asia and the Caucasus of Muslim majority, because we have a chance in these countries to assist them in developing a Muslim nation with a set of principles and values of a secular nature which will be an answer and a countermove to some more extreme and intolerant fundamentalist modes that some other individuals or organizations or states are proposing in other Muslim nations.

So this is our policy. We'll never give up on our fundamental principles and our values of human rights. But I recognize that we should probably try to do more on a security and economic front as well.

Mr. SMITH. On the meetings of the human dimension—

Min. GEOANA. Excuse me. On the Warsaw thing, I was also worried that the fact that there is a tendency of shrinking the time appropriated to such discussions. Unfortunately, I myself—I took off from Bucharest trying to get to Warsaw for this meeting, and I had a technical problem with my airplane, so I had to return.

We also believe that the human dimension at a time where appropriate should be—should be, if not generous, should be in full accordance to the importance of this subject for our organization. And this is something that we already conveyed to our specific institutions in the OSCE.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Minister, if I could ask you, are the Jehovah's Witnesses generally satisfied with the Supreme Court decision? And has that decision been implemented? Is that one of the issues that remains—

Min. GEOANA. I think that they are very happy with the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice in Bucharest. This is also another proof that our judicial system is not only independent but also looking at such cases with—

Mr. SMITH. Is it being carried out?

Min. GEOANA. And now that's why they're coming to Bucharest in, I think, 2 weeks' time—2 weeks' time—exactly for our lawyers and their lawyers to look into this thing and try to make the registration happen.

You made this point at the beginning, that sometimes there is a tendency, sort of a bureaucratic slowdown, and some bureaucratic barriers on basically registering these kind of things. This is not a policy of our government.

We also want to go, and we basically welcomed their attempt to go to the judicial system in Romania, because when it comes especially to the military service, this is something that we do not feel that our government is called to take such an important decision because it's creating a precedent.

So alternative military service is something which is not usual in Romania. So we prefer to go to the highest court of the country, of the land, and ask their advice. And their advice was crystal clear, so it's up to us to implement the decisions of the highest court of justice in the land.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Mr. Minister, at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul summit, there was an agreement there should be a political resolution to the conflict in Chechnya, and deployment of the OSCE mission in July of this year was one of the accomplishments of your chairmanship.

What, if any, role do you envision the OSCE in having of the current conflict?

Min. GEOANA. Mr. Chairman, as you know, our mission there, our assistance group there, has done a pretty good job so far. Of course, we are interested also on the political track of the evolutions in Chechnya, and we are also very highly interested in the dialogue, political dialogue, between the Russian Federation and the Chechen leaders.

So far there is no role of our assistance group in the peace talks between Moscow and President Maskhadov, as the host country accepts no international mediators in these talks so far. So I want to be explicit on this thing. We are not involved into this operation. We encouraged it.

We are interested in being part of this, but so far there is strong resistance from the host country in having international mediators or organizations dealing with this subject.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Well, as part of the agreement, the OSCE agreed to pay about \$510,000, a little over a half a million dollars, to Moscow to provide security for the mission. Have the members of the mission enjoyed pretty much freedom of movement? Tell me a little bit about the security situation of the mission members.

Min. GEOANA. Because of the security environment which is still extremely risky in Chechnya, we thought and we still believe that it is our duty, first, to make sure that the security of our personnel is taken care of. We cannot just play with the lives of the people who are sacrificing themselves and doing such a tremendous job for democracy and human rights.

Sen. CAMPBELL. How many people are there?

Min. GEOANA. Only six people on our side.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Six.

Min. GEOANA. Nevertheless, to transport them, we have to use armored vehicles. That's, unfortunately, the daily life in places like that. There is no other security arrangement possible other than going to one federal agency.

We have gone to the Ministry of Justice, because we thought that going to the Ministry of the Interior would be perceived by the Chechens as a provocation. At least the Ministry of Justice in Russia was not involved in Chechnya in any of the stages of the conflict over there.

We believe that no price is too high for making sure that our people are safe. So far they enjoy freedom of movement, and as I said, I think that so far our relationship with the federal authorities are encouraging.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Did I understand you to say they have to travel in armor-plated vehicles?

Min. GEOANA. Yes. Basically, it's not an armored vehicle. I travel myself with such vehicles. This is the way in which our monitors are also transported in Macedonia. This is not a military operation, but it is basically a kind of police armored vehicle.

Sen. CAMPBELL. Well, the \$510,000 doesn't go very far if we have to armor-plate vehicles. Who provides those? Russian security provides those?

Min. GEOANA. Yes.

Sen. CAMPBELL. I see. Okay. I have no further questions.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Minister, thank you so much for your testimony and for clearly and succinctly answering the questions. We look forward to working with you as we have done so well in the past.

Sen. CAMPBELL. I do, too, Mr. Minister. I think there may be some further questions we might submit to you in writing from some of the other members of the Commission, if we can do that.

But I certainly appreciate your being here. I have to tell you that your travel schedule certainly exceeds ours, and ours is terrible. So I wish you well and hope you stay in good health in your travels until you end your term. Thank you for being here.

Min. GEOANA. Thank you very much.

Sen. CAMPBELL. This Commission hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:01 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL,
CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE

It is appropriate that we welcome Foreign Minister Geoana to the Commission in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Minister met with Commissioners at the beginning of 2001 and we have been in close contact as the events this year have unfolded. Mr. Minister, I appreciate the close working relationship you have maintained with the Commission, a tradition I hope to continue with your Portuguese successor next year.

Romania has encountered many challenges and accomplished a great deal since assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE earlier this year. Yet, much remains to be done. Indeed, Romania's chairmanship will conclude as the international community faces a new set of challenges that affect every one of the 55 OSCE participating States.

My hope is that "Operation Enduring Freedom" will bring enduring freedom to all of the countries in the vast OSCE region, including the countries of Central Asia. In this regard, I see the OSCE's role in promoting democracy, human rights and economic liberty and the campaign to root out terrorism as complementary.

Americans are united and determined to see the war against terrorism — in all of its forms — succeed. The Helsinki Commission itself has faced serious disruption as a direct result of terrorism, but we will not be deterred.

Erosion of our common commitment to human rights would only lead to greater instability, not less. It will be essential to dissuade despots of any notion that we are abandoning our firm commitment to democracy and human rights. To do otherwise would imperil the very values and principles which terrorists seek to destroy. Paying lip service to human rights will not suffice.

As President Bush has said, "it is important to distinguish between those who pursue legitimate political aspirations and terrorists." History has shown that the seeds of repression bear very poisonous fruit.

Mr. Minister, I appreciate your leadership in focusing the work of the OSCE on combating corruption and organized crime, as well as your strong support for the Southeastern Europe Cooperation Initiative's center for combating transnational organized crime, located in Bucharest. Clearly there is a strong nexus between the operations of transnational criminal organizations and international terrorist organizations. Indeed, according to experts, they frequently work together in the fields of drug trafficking and money laundering. I strongly urge the OSCE participating States to redouble their efforts to pursue practical cooperation to fight international crime and corruption.

The past year has provided Romania with a unique opportunity to "lead by example" in implementation of its OSCE commitments during its chairmanship. Indeed, several of our Commissioners have followed developments in Romania for decades. We appreciate Minister Geoana's work to ensure that longstanding human rights concerns in Romania be addressed by Bucharest. In this regard, we look forward to continued action to overcome the legacy of the past, including anti-Semitism, while

protecting the rights of all Romanian citizens, including Roma as well as ethnic and religious minorities. Mr. Minister, we wish you continued success in the closing and challenging days of Romania's chairmanship of the OSCE and your views on how to strengthen the OSCE process.

I am pleased to yield to Co-Chairman Smith for any remarks he would like to make at this time.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this hearing on Romania's leadership as Chair of the OSCE. I join you in welcoming my friend, Foreign Minister Geoana, and look forward to his testimony.

The Commission has frequently held hearings to examine various aspects of the OSCE—in the past two months alone, we have held hearings which have examined police training issues in the OSCE region, U.S. policy towards the OSCE, and the efforts of the OSCE in resolving the situation in Moldova. We have been fortunate, at many of these events, to hear directly from OSCE officials, including Mission Heads and the Representative of Freedom of the Media. I look forward to the insights that Foreign Minister Geoana, serving in the OSCE's most senior political position, can bring to us today.

Minister Geoana, as you know, I, along with several other Commissioners, had a number of concerns about Romania's readiness to serve as the OSCE Chair-in-Office and, indeed, we wrote to Secretary of State Albright to express those concerns in 1999. I have to say that I have been deeply impressed with your leadership, engagement, and commitment. Thanks to your skills, Romania has received high marks for its stewardship of the OSCE community. I particularly appreciate your initiative in spearheading OSCE meetings on trafficking and on Roma.

In fact, being the top man or woman in the OSCE seems to bring greater and greater demands each year, with the plethora of conflicts and crises that continually erupt in the OSCE region. Unfortunately, the events of September 11 have added to the challenges the OSCE community faces.

While I commend you for your own role in serving the OSCE community, I must express some disappointment about the situation in Romania. When we wrote to Secretary Albright in 1999, we did so in great measure because of human rights issues in your own country. The country that serves as OSCE Chair should, in my view, lead by example. Unfortunately, many of the problems we described in 1999 persist. Statues celebrating an executed war criminal stand on at least four pieces of public property, there has been no move at all to repeal Romania's criminal defamation law, and much needs to be done to improve respect for the basic human rights of Roma.

I am particularly concerned about the recent proposal by the Mayor of Piatr Neamt—a town which hosts an Antonescu statue, by the way—to create a walled, guarded ghetto for Roma. I welcome Prime Minister Nastase condemnation of this outrageous plan, but the very fact that an elected official could offer such an idea to the public says a great deal about the climate of intolerance that Roma continue to face in Romania. I am encouraged by the fact that the OSCE's Senior Advisor on Roma Issues, Nicolae Gheorghe, and Romani CRISS, one of the leading NGOs in Romania, is working to address these issues and I hope your government will support them in their efforts. There is still time for the Romanian Chairmanship to lead by example.

Again, I appreciate the Foreign Minister's desire to testify before this Commission and offer his insights as Chairman-in-Office and vision for the OSCE and its role in the region.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HIS EXCELLENCY MIRCEA DAN GEOANA,
CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE, ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

I would like to start with a very brief summary of Romania's objectives for our Chairmanship-in-Office, what we believe have been the most pressing issues during the year so far and what we hope to have achieved by the end of the year.

When we took over the Chairmanship, we wanted to ensure that all OSCE Participating States should continue to believe that the OSCE was addressing issues of concern to them and their citizens in a practical and action-oriented way.

Our objectives were:

- that the OSCE should remain relevant and useful as an instrument for crisis management, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- that it should remain a key body for promoting the rule of law and human rights;
- but that it should also strengthen its activity in other areas such as the economic and environmental dimension;
- and that it should be prepared to cope with new security challenges such as organised crime and corruption, international terrorism and extremism.

We were also concerned that the OSCE should pay more attention to regions which had been less in the international spotlight, such as the Caucasus and Central Asia. I would mention four specific issues which have taken much of our attention this year: Macedonia, Kosovo, corruption and organised crime, and terrorism.

MACEDONIA

The situation in Macedonia has given us a clear lesson that conflict can still erupt unexpectedly. The situation has stabilised for now thanks to the concerted and intense efforts of the US, the EU, NATO and the OSCE. The NATO operation to disarm and disband the ethnic Albanian groups was a clear success. But there were worrying signs that some groups were trying to delay the Parliamentary process which would have thrown the whole peace agreement in jeopardy. As CIO, I joined NATO Secretary General Robertson, EU High Representative Solana and Special Envoy Pardew in making clear to political leaders in Macedonia that they must respect the spirit of the Ohrid Agreement. Artificial delaying tactics will not be acceptable to the international community. The Albanian parties have returned to Parliament, the President has agreed that the amnesty declaration needs to be clarified, and there is every sign that the Constitutional amendments will be approved by the end of the month.

But the really hard work is still ahead: rebuilding confidence within the population. The OSCE's role in this is critical. The Government's decision to send Macedonian security forces back into areas affected by the conflict without first consulting the international community was unwise and counter-productive. Fortunately, no violent incidents took place and the Government agreed that security forces would not be deployed in sensitive areas until OSCE monitors were in the field. We

have taken the necessary decisions to put 120 monitors in the field, including police observers, and have begun a pilot programme in 5 villages near Kumanovo. We are working closely with the US on training for a multi-ethnic police force which is an essential element in the confidence-building process.

KOSOVO

The 17 November elections for self-governing institutions in Kosovo are the most important event of the year. These elections must be inclusive if we want to see viable and sustainable institutions in a multiethnic Kosovo. The OSCE has played an important role in organizing and supporting the voter registration process. More than 170.000 Serbs have registered on the electoral lists and a representative number of Serb political parties have registered as candidates. Our main priority now is to ensure that on the day the Kosovo Serbs actually exercise their vote. We have pressed the authorities in Belgrade to encourage a strong turn-out. For our part, we are working with UNMIK and KFOR on the security concerns raised by Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade so that refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) feel they can return safely to their homes.

Among our many activities in Kosovo, it is worth highlighting the work of the Kosovo Police Service School which is training local police officers and trainers. The first Kosovo Police trainers of the KPSS graduated on 1 August and are now training police cadets. The School aims to provide police training in line with democratic standards for at least 4000 locally recruited officers, including members of minority communities and women.

The long-term future and stability of Kosovo and all those who live there is still far from certain. We must strive for a working relationship between Belgrade and Pristina. The international community must keep making this point both to the Albanian leaders in Kosovo and to the authorities in Belgrade.

CORRUPTION AND ORGANISED CRIME

The Romanian Chairmanship has consistently emphasized that corruption is a serious threat to OSCE values. Corruption and illegal activity like money laundering, trafficking and organised crime endanger not only economic growth and sound development, but also our security. And we must pay particular attention to the links between organised crime and terrorist groups, particularly on the financing side.

THE OSCE ECONOMIC FORUM IN MAY FOCUSED ON TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

OSCE can play an important part in stimulating the political will to develop and implement the necessary legislation. Promoting regional co-operation, strengthening civil society and increasing civil participation in the governmental decision-making process can contribute to good governance.

Let me mention some concrete examples of on-going projects in this field. The OSCE Presence in Albania, along with the World Bank and the European Commission, continues to provide direct advice and strategic planning on anti-corruption issues. The OSCE Office in Armenia

is coordinating the International Anti-corruption Joint Task Force. Together with other OSCE missions in the Caucasus, they have built up a network of NGOs.

US support and financial contributions to OSCE anti-corruption activities have been enormously valuable. We are grateful for US continued support for such important projects.

Concrete action could include:

- Promoting the adoption and implementation of international legal instruments; developing codes of conduct (an Economic Forum recommendation);
- Holding periodic consultations with partner institutions and organisations (such as the tripartite meeting on good governance, last February, with the Council of Europe and the UN);
- Involving OSCE Field Missions in the Council of Europe's GRECO evaluations, under the Stability Pact anticorruption initiative.
- Cooperating with the SECI Regional Centre on Combating Cross-Border Crime. Romania has encouraged the SECI Centre to make contact with Central Asian law enforcement authorities who are interested in the SECI experience and in cooperating in SECI activities against organised crime.

In the fight against organized crime, we have focused on the illegal trafficking of human beings. The Romanian Chairmanship organised a regional Conference in May this year on Illegal Trafficking which was attended by the Director of the FBI and other senior Government and law enforcement representatives from South East Europe and European Union countries. The agreed conclusions of that meeting set out priorities for national, regional and internationally coordinated action to eliminate human trafficking, including a role for the OSCE.

The OSCE has taken its responsibilities seriously. The OSCE/ODIHR is chairing the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings and has initiated a number of projects in the field, for example in Kosovo, Armenia and Albania. Our field missions work alongside the IOM in developing public awareness campaigns and are active in advising governments on anti-trafficking legislation.

TERRORISM

The 11 September attacks against the United States brought home more than any other single act of terrorism the dangers from international terrorism to freedom, humanity and the security of the individual, values which the OSCE is committed to defend and uphold. The OSCE condemned rigorously the 11 September attacks. We have fully supported the creation of a strong and broad international coalition against terrorism and the targeted strikes launched by the United States and United Kingdom against Al Qaeda terrorist training camps and Taliban military installations in Afghanistan.

But, along with other international organisations, we have also begun to consider what specific contribution the OSCE can make in the international fight against terrorism.

In my address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 20 September, I mentioned three areas where I believe the OSCE can bring added value:

- Making use of our political will and solidarity in committing to joint action, with a strong Declaration on combating terrorism to be adopted at the Bucharest OSCE Ministerial;
- Focussing our attention on addressing root causes, such as economic and social marginalisation which can be fertile ground for extremist ideologies, and fighting the “grey zones” of organised crime, including trafficking in people and arms;
- Acting as a bridge between regional initiatives in order to set common priorities.

Co-operation between OSCE states can only be truly effective if all States strengthen or introduce anti-terrorism legislation, including European-wide powers of arrest and extradition of suspects. A common legal framework is essential for the exchange of information and expertise between law enforcement agencies. The appointment of an OSCE Police Adviser, which is supported by most OSCE States, would be the first step in promoting this kind of active cooperation.

The Bishkek Conference on Terrorism, Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime in December provides a good opportunity for us to review the state of play on signature and ratification of the various UN Conventions on Terrorism and to strengthen police and judicial systems in the democratic context. Our hope is that the Central Asians can draw on the experience of other countries in counter-terrorism.

We have now set up a Task Force in Vienna to look at concrete steps the Participating States should take to co-ordinate our efforts to combat terrorism with the aim of developing an OSCE-wide Action Plan against terrorism for adoption at the Bucharest Ministerial in December.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The protection of human rights has been a core activity for the OSCE since its inception in Helsinki in 1975. The Romanian Chairmanship believes that this should remain so. Respect for such basic rights as freedom of expression, freedom of religious belief, freedom to vote and the equal treatment of minorities, including the Roma, are fundamental for security. We have spent many years and vast resources on crisis management and rebuilding societies after conflict. It might be going too far to say that if these basic rights had been respected fully, we would not have witnessed the vicious conflicts of the past ten years. But I am convinced that the results would not have been so catastrophic or have required such massive international intervention if free and democratic systems had been in place.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Governing all our activity has been the principle of working in close synergy with other international organisations: namely, the UN, NATO, the European Union, the Council of Europe, as well as other more specialised agencies such as the UN High Commission for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The Romanian Chairmanship's priorities for the OSCE Bucharest Ministerial are to set the agenda for the next few years in certain areas. We are aiming for the following results:

- Strong declarations on Terrorism and on Illegal Trafficking
- Appointment of an OSCE Police Adviser
- Adoption of an OSCE Action Plan on Roma/Sinti issues
- Strengthened commitments to assist with quality refugee return
- Substantive declaration on South East Europe · Agreement on Institutional Strengthening, including legal capacity for the OSCE

I believe that if we want to build sustainable democracy in South East Europe, it is time to look for a strategy for the region as a whole. The time for ad hoc localised solutions is past. The syndrome of dependency on the major powers cannot continue indefinitely. The countries of the region must start to exercise responsibility themselves by looking to their own resources and by developing healthy regional cooperation systems. This is not an overnight process and the international community must remain engaged. But we should be pushing now for more effective self-governance in line with OSCE standards. I have highlighted only the most pressing issues but am happy to offer more information on other areas of activity.

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD
TO AMB. MIRCEA GEOANA
AND HIS RESPONSE**

Question. OSCE participating States have committed themselves to preventing racial, ethnic, or religious hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and intolerance of Roma. But, there are at least four statues of Ion Antonescu, a man executed as a war criminal, standing on public land in Romania today. As you know, 250,000 Jews from Romania or Romanian-held territories died during the war, in addition to 19,000 Roma. Why has your government failed to have these statues removed from public land?

Answer. The Government Ordinance no.137/2000 was approved in 16 January 2002 (Law 48/2002 published in the Office Journal no 069/30.01.2002). Romania is the first Central and Eastern Europe country having a anti-discrimination law.

On 27 of November 2001, Government Decision no. 1194 on the establishment of the National Council to Combat Discrimination was approved (published in the Official Journal no. 792 on 12 December 2001). The Council was set up in order to apply the sanctions stipulated in the Governmental Ordinance no.137/2000 for preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination.

- The statues of Marshall Ion Antonescu in Jilava, Sarmas (Mures county), Calarasi and Bucharest stand on private property. The statues of Antonescu in Piatra Neamt and Slobozia (Ialomita county) stand on public ground during 1993–1994. Similary initiatives in Cluj-Napoca and Drobeta Turnu Severin were overturned by central or local authorities.
- Since its creation in 1997, the Department for the Protection of National Minorities (whose activities have been transferred to the newly created Department for Inter-ethnic Relations) allocated every year a special budgetary fund for programs against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance. This fund has increased every year and was generally used for awareness raising projects on Roma and Jewish issues.

Question. The mayor of Piatra Neamt—which, by the way, is one of the cities which has an Antonescu statue—has proposed putting Roma into a walled ghetto that would be under police surveillance. This sounds a lot like the scandalous wall that was built (and then finally torn down) in the Czech Republic two years ago. Will your government take resolute steps to ensure this plan for segregation is never implemented?

Answer. The mayor of Piatra Neamt announced, last year, his intention to build a neighborhood quarter in the town, with block of flats for the socially disadvantage people. The initiative was disapproved by the Roma's ONG who considered that this initiative seems to put the Roma people into a walled ghetto under police surveillance. The President, the Prime Minister and other authorities condemned the statement by the mayor and spoke in favor of integration than isolation. Following the involvement and assistance of the ODIHR-OSCE Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Romanian central and local authorities and civic organizations signed an agreement, on October 26th, 2001, with the aim of monitoring the situation in Piatra Neamt.











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