

ECMI

ANNUAL REPORT
2002

Excerpts on the Caucasus

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I. Action-Oriented Projects

The past year saw a change in the approach to minority issues in Europe. Up to the first half of the year, the debate on minority-majority relations was conducted mainly in terms of conflict transformation. The fragility of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the unresolved issues connected with the future status of Kosovo, the hesitant implementation of the Ohrid agreement on peace in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the attempts to keep together for at least another three years the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) all preoccupied international actors in this field. This was coupled with concern about the still unaddressed conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh (Armenia/Azerbaijan), Transdniestria (Moldova), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia), and Chechnya.

During 2002, ECMI continued to play a crucial role in stabilizing the settlements in Southeastern Europe, while beginning to prepare itself for activities in the Caucasus region, should settlements advance there. While maintaining its strong interest in the Balkan and Baltic regions, ECMI has also started to lay the groundwork for activities in the Caucasus area. Tom Trier, newly appointed Senior Research Associate, conducted a pilot visit to the region and authored a substantive background study, which will inform the evolving activities of the Centre. These will range from preventative action in relation to conflicts that might still be added to the long list of areas of tension in the Caucasus, as well as measures designed to accompany and consolidate the hesitant peace processes that are meant to address some of these.