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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE Office supports workshop on cross-border co-operation for Afghan and Tajik senior border officers

DUSHANBE, 23 October 2009 - A five-day OSCE workshop that fostered cross-border co-operation between Tajikistan's Border Troops and its neighbouring countries' Border Agencies concluded in Dushanbe today.

Senior officers from the Afghan Border Police and Tajik Border Troops who are involved in co-operation across the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan took part in the workshop, as did Tajik officers working along the Tajik borders with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

"This workshop was an example of the kind of practical assistance the OSCE can provide to strengthen border security and relations between Tajikistan and Afghanistan," said Ambassador Ivar Vikki, Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.

"The workshop was a step toward co-operation between border agencies of neighbouring countries, which is key to effective border management and to countering cross-border crime. "

During the workshop, Afghan and Tajik participants studied international best practices in cross-border co-operation to prevent crime. They particularly focused on the so-called border delegate co-operation model, which is used successfully by many OSCE participating States. The agenda also included a series of lectures and group exercises on topics such as joint operations and exercises, information exchange and joint risk analyses.

Two experienced border delegate experts from the Finnish Border Guard and Russian Border Service led the workshop and shared their countries' experiences of cross-border co-operation. The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Dushanbe offered a session on asylum seekers and refugees in the context of cross-border co-operation. There was also a presentation on the use of Border Liaison Offices in enhancing cross-border co-operation. The OSCE Office in Tajikistan led a session on

integrity and anti-corruption matters.

The workshop was held as part of work to implement a 2007 OSCE Ministerial Council decision on OSCE engagement with Afghanistan.

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