# Editorial

In January 2015, Serbia took over the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), succeeding Switzerland. In addition to the urgency of the Ukrainian crisis, the issue of reconciliation and strengthening regional cooperation in the Western Balkans remains a current topic. More than 15 years after the end of the Yugoslav wars, many challenges remain. How far along is the reconciliation process in the Western Balkans? What is the outcome of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia? What about social cohesion and the situation of women, and men, in the region? And what is Switzerland’s role in supporting the Serbian chairmanship of the OSCE?

This issue presents the problems, issues and challenges facing the Western Balkans through a series of accounts from Swiss civil society players and government institutions.

Marie Seidel
Editor

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## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>NEWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; What Impact Has International Criminal Justice Had in the Former Yugoslavia?</td>
<td>&gt; Closer Cooperation between KOFF and FriEnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Panel Discussion on Narratives for the Future in the Western Balkans</td>
<td>&gt; Police Officers and Nomads: Actors in Peace Processes in Benin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; KOFF Roundtable on Peacebuilding and Gender Stereotypes in Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>&gt; Syria: Lessons from Peace &amp; Conflict Studies? swisspeace Summer School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; “Muški Centar”: A Centre for Men in Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>&gt; Improving Leadership Skills within Peacebuilding: Ongoing Training from the GCSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; ICP’s Project in the Balkans: Master in Peace Studies</td>
<td>&gt; International Partner Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; SDC: Committed to Establishing an Effective Civil Society in the Western Balkans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Chairmanship of the OSCE: the Role of Switzerland in the Western Balkans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPORT</th>
<th>PUBLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Police Officers and Nomads: Actors in Peace Processes in Benin</td>
<td>&gt; Politorbis No. 58 – Distress and Crisis Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Panel Discussion on Narratives for the Future in the Western Balkans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; “Muški Centar”: A Centre for Men in Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; ICP’s Project in the Balkans: Master in Peace Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Chairmanship of the OSCE: the Role of Switzerland in the Western Balkans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEWS**

- **Closer Cooperation between KOFF and FriEnt**
- **Police Officers and Nomads: Actors in Peace Processes in Benin**
- **Syria: Lessons from Peace & Conflict Studies? swisspeace Summer School**
- **Improving Leadership Skills within Peacebuilding: Ongoing Training from the GCSP**
- **International Partner Organisations**

**PUBLICATIONS**

- **Politorbis No. 58 – Distress and Crisis Abroad**

**WEB TIP**

- **Balkan Insight**

**CALENDAR**

- **Upcoming Events**

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What Impact Has International Criminal Justice Had in the Former Yugoslavia?

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was established in 1993 with the aim of prosecuting serious crimes committed during the wars in Yugoslavia since 1991. Now, 21 years since the ICTY’s work began and two years before it is due to end, the question is being raised: what impact has this tribunal had in the region?

This question is a valid one, if you think back to the ICTY’s 20th anniversary celebrations in Sarajevo at the end of 2013, when representatives of victims’ organisations turned their backs on the President of the Tribunal, Judge Theodor Meron, as he was giving his speech. The words “R.I.P. International Justice” were emblazoned on a banner, and Bakir Izetbegović, representing the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, expressed his disappointment at the ICTY’s most recent judgments, saying that he no longer recognised the once brave and committed tribunal of the 1990s. This unusually harsh criticism may seem surprising at first, but such views are being heard more and more frequently in academic circles too. This has mainly been prompted by a series of controversial decisions by the ICTY, starting with the acquittal of two Croatian generals in November 2012.

There is fierce debate surrounding the ICTY’s alleged backpedalling on an important question in international criminal law, namely command responsibility. Critics of the ICTY and international criminal justice are turning this to their advantage, having complained for years that international criminal justice was too expensive, ineffective and – under certain circumstances – even damaging. The real legal issue at stake – the extent to which people in positions of authority can be held responsible for crimes committed by their subordinates – became a genuine political controversy when allegations emerged accusing the ICTY of being politically influenced, because the tribunal had previously gone too far with its jurisprudence on this matter in the understanding of some states. This conspiracy theory cannot be proven, but more recent examples of the ICTY’s case law clearly call the standards previously used into question. Whether this will have a significant impact on the entire system of international criminal justice is questionable, however. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is not bound by ICTY jurisprudence and precedents and the Rome Statute of the ICC, which is regarded as the codification of international criminal law as it stands today, contains extensive rules regarding command responsibility both for civilian and military leaders.

Yet, the crucial issue – i.e. how the administration of justice is perceived in the countries concerned, and particularly amongst the victims – remains unanswered. It must be brought into the context of a broader discourse on dealing with the past. The problem here lies in the promises that international criminal tribunals make: the ICTY’s founding documents mentioned the restoration of peace, reconciliation and justice. The assumption was that international justice would give victims a voice, combat impunity throughout the world, strengthen the rule of law, prevent future genocides and war crimes, and compile an objective narrative of the past. Yet in reality, a tribunal’s powers are far more limited: individual perpetrators are convicted, certain facts are documented in verdicts and, of course, some victims, too, gain a sense of moral satisfaction from the sentences and through their own testimonies, but this is as much as a tribunal can do. However, the disappointed reaction to the work of the ICTY in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the questioning of the actual legacy of this major international experiment cannot be explained by excessive and ultimately unrealistic demands alone.

The issues that the victims’ representatives raised at the ICTY’s anniversary conference in Sarajevo in 2013 indicate that the approach to dealing with the past in the former Yugoslavia has been very one-sided and that even today, more than ten years after the last combat operations in Kosovo, there are still some serious
gaps. The questions posed in Sarajevo concern matters of principle: why should we, as victims, still have to wait for compensation? Why is a former camp henchman working for the social security office where I have to collect my pension? Why don’t I, as a victim, get any protection during the war crimes trial when I go back to my village, where some alleged perpetrator can roam freely? Why are our children being taught diametrically opposing “truths” about the conflict at school in different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina? Why do the governments in the region not acknowledge the suffering of victims in the other countries and accept their own share of responsibility? Why isn’t a regional truth commission being set up, as civil society actors in Belgrade, Zagreb, Pristina and Sarajevo have long been calling for? These questions may not have been so pressing now if the international community had opted for a more comprehensive approach to dealing with the past right from the start – an approach which would have taken into account the right to know, to justice, to reparations and the guarantee of non-recurrence in equal measure. The fact is that the subject of comprehensive compensation for victims was not seriously discussed until 2013, most of the former Yugoslavian states do not have an effective witness protection scheme, and alleged war criminals are free to hold government offices. Yet the ICTY cannot be blamed for these failings. If the focus had not been purely on dealing with serious crimes through criminal proceedings, the jurisprudence of this important tribunal may have been seen in a different light and measured by different standards.

Finally, the ICTY also deserves credit for the significant impact it has had on international criminal law and its further development. For example, the tribunal is largely to thank for the extension of protection given to civil populations in internal armed conflicts – at legal level, at least – and the classification of sexual violence as an international crime. It could even be argued that, were it not for the preparatory work of the ICTY, no criminal tribunals would have been set up for Rwanda and Sierra Leone and ultimately there would be no permanent International Criminal Court either. After all, it was the ICTY that demonstrated that international criminal law can function effectively and conform to high standards, even during and shortly after an extremely violent conflict.

REPORT

Panel Discussion on Narratives for the Future in the Western Balkans

Narratives are central to dealing with the past. Existing narratives in the Western Balkans are obstructing regional reconciliation and are cementing existing prejudices that can incite repetition, divisions, mistrust and denial. However, narratives also provide an opportunity to explore commonalities, re-build confidence and communicate.

The Dealing with the Past Programme of swisspeace organised and moderated a panel discussion on narratives for the Future in the Western Balkans as part of the OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference 2-3 December 2014. Our discussions began with Izabela Kisić from the Serbian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights who opened the panel with a presentation on the importance of a narrative approach to the question of reconciliation and building a peaceful future in the region. Her opening remarks were followed by two inputs on projects working with narratives: “Peace Boat” presented by Jasna Bastić, and “Documenta” presented by Vesna Teršelić. In these presentations we learned about working with marginalised voices, the challenges of working with different interpretations of the past in an ethical and sensitive way, and the importance of working with youth and looking...
KOFF Roundtable on Peacebuilding and Gender Stereotypes in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Balkan Wars have shown that gender-specific violence has developed into an important instrument of warfare. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 (classifying rape as a weapon of war) were important countermeasures against this, but it is now becoming evident that peacebuilding is not paying close enough attention to gender-specific discrimination and that it is still bogged down in stereotypes harking back to the war. During a roundtable discussion run by KOFF’s Gender team, Madeleine Rees from the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) explained how this approach has a particularly negative effect on the everyday life of women in transition countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Up to now, she explained, it has been difficult for women to get actively involved in social processes. This is due to well-established stereotypes: masculinity based on physical strength on the one hand, and femininity associated with excessive vulnerability on the other. International actors have also criticised the discourse that women need men to protect them and that men should behave accordingly (i.e. that they should protect their women), which plays an influential role in politics, industry and civil society.

During the roundtable, it emerged that the NGOs involved in gender-oriented peacebuilding are also struggling with these stereotypes. One complaint was that it is difficult to gauge the impact of such stereotypes on projects, as the women themselves are often stuck in these prescribed roles. It is clear to all concerned that the Swiss National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of Resolution 1325 cannot guarantee a gender-sensitive transition. This would require macro-economic and political strategies involving a redistribution of resources such as labour, money and time, as well as a transformation of the prevailing image of masculinity. In this respect, KOFF offers scope for a civil society debate on the effectiveness of the Swiss NAP in transition countries like Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.
“Muški Centar”: A Centre for Men in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Iamaneh Switzerland
Maja Loncarevic

Gender-based and, more specifically, domestic violence is a major problem in Bosnia-Herzegovina, even though it is almost 20 years since the war there ended. It is an expression of social upheaval, the destruction of masculine identities and a lack of coping capacity at individual and social level. Experience shows that victim protection initiatives and law enforcement are not enough to reduce domestic violence on a sustainable basis. In 2011, the first centre dedicated specifically to men was established in the northern Bosnian city of Modriča, offering men in need an important place of refuge and working to prevent violent behaviour. Iamaneh Switzerland was involved in setting up this centre and continues to support it today.

Every day, men of all ages come to the centre, seeking a listening ear for their problems and concerns. Through workshops, film screenings and discussions, they work in groups to tackle specific issues based on their needs. One particularly popular scheme is the anti-stress programme, which helps men to relieve tension by engaging in sporting activities and voluntary work. The support centre has developed into an important point of contact for men. They now have the courage to seek professional help, finding the support they need to resolve their personal crises.

The centre’s core activity – its work with offenders – has got off to a tentative start. Offenders cannot yet be ordered by a court to seek help, as provided for by law, because the regulations required are not yet in place. Nevertheless, in the past two years, 48 men with a history of violence have voluntarily signed up to the centre’s offender support programme, where they learn to take responsibility for their actions, deal with their own violent behaviour and find alternative ways of coping with crises. Most of these 48 men are happy to have completed the programme. They have worked very hard on improving themselves and have gone back into their everyday lives with plenty of good intentions. Many of them keep in close contact with the centre even after they have finished the programme.

ICP’s Project in the Balkans: Master in Peace Studies

ICP
Marie Berset

The project “South-East European Master’s Programme in Peace Studies” is a multilateral peace education programme. It brings together the Universities of Basel, Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb, as well as the Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding (ICP) in an institutional partnership with the aim to develop and introduce a regional Master of Peace Studies for South-East Europe.

In the former Yugoslav region, a scientific approach to peace is still at an early stage. With reference to the recent violent past of South-East Europe, a coordinated academic approach to peace studies, inter-cultural dialogue and nonviolent conflict resolution should be developed at the universities of Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. The scientific dimension of peace research would serve as a prerequisite and framework for the development of practical projects and the application of scientific findings on conflict transformation and peacebuilding. This would have a positive impact to guarantee the peaceful future of the region.

The project includes elements of capacity building and knowledge transfer from Swiss partners to beneficiaries in South-East Europe and between South-East Europe partners themselves, as well as curriculum development and harmonisation.
Another element is the strengthening of local research infrastructure, especially library holdings and access to relevant literature. The goal is to develop a unique, high-quality, and locally oriented regional master's programme in peace studies as a tangible outcome of inter-university cooperation. This would create conditions for building a network of young professionals and researchers. By creating the opportunity for broadening and deepening the current cooperation of scientists and NGO representatives, the project would also inspire future regional peace-related project. In addition, the scientific exchange and joint development of curricula regarding the conflicts in the region is also a contribution to reconciliation and dialogue. The project is co-financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

SDC: Committed to Establishing an Effective Civil Society in the Western Balkans

SDC
Mélodi Binay
Harald Schenker

Links
SDC Projects:
Democratic Society Promotion
Civil Society Support Facility – Constituency Building
Support for the establishment and development of the Macedonian Parliamentary Institute
Institutional support for the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities

In recent times, the strained economic situation and persistently high unemployment rates – particularly amongst young people – combined with corruption and inefficient institutions have prompted the rise of social and societal movements in the countries of the Western Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, has seen the emergence of a movement based on deliberative democracy, which aims to shift the focus of politics towards the needs of the people. In Macedonia, a new protest movement driven by students and professors is campaigning for universities’ autonomy.

Nevertheless, Western Balkan societies remain divided, with boundaries running mostly along political, ethnic and religious fault lines, but also along socio-economic ones. At the same time, both political parties and traditional NGOs have lost a lot of their credibility in people’s eyes.

With a view to strengthening social cohesion and promoting dialogue on relevant issues, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is supporting programmes which are designed to help civil societies develop further. The focus is on establishing deliberative mechanisms for political decision-making, overcoming social divides and steering politics more firmly towards the needs of the members or target groups of individual organisations.

Greater efforts are being made to establish civil society firmly and systemically, so that it can operate on an equal footing with the relevant national and local institutions. Its active involvement in institutional and public discourse would provide an important counterweight to a political system driven by party interests, which is how it is being run at the moment. Organisations in Kosovo and Macedonia are receiving direct support, while in Bosnia the time has come to open up scope within society for debate. With the same purpose in mind, the SDC is also stepping up its engagement not only with national and local parliaments, but with informal and traditional authorities too.
Chairmanship of the OSCE: the Role of Switzerland in the Western Balkans

As part of its chairmanship of the OSCE in 2014, Switzerland sought to continue its long-standing commitment to peace and stability in the Western Balkans. Under the aegis of the Special Representative of the chairperson-in-office of the OSCE for the Western Balkans, the Swiss Ambassador, Gérard Stoudmann, Switzerland made great strides to further reconciliation efforts and promote regional cooperation. Its facilitating role helped to bring about the signature of a declaration, initiated by the International Commission on Missing Persons, by four presidents in the region, in which they committed their respective governments to finally resolving the issue of those missing following the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, thanks to Ambassador Stoudmann’s shuttle diplomacy, the Swiss chairmanship contributed to firmly establishing the role of the OSCE in the implementation of the agreement on the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina concluded in April 2013. The Swiss chairmanship also supported the OSCE’s facilitating role during the Kosovan parliamentary elections in June, which were able to be organised for the first time across the entire territory of the young Republic. In order to contribute to the integration of the new municipalities that were legitimately elected under the Kosovan legal system, the Swiss chairmanship also encouraged the OSCE to carry out its mission in north Kosovo.

In 2015, Switzerland intends to continue its commitment to the region in partnership with Serbia, who holds the chairmanship of the organisation this year, under the terms of a joint biennial work plan drafted under their consecutive chairmanships. Ambassador Stoudmann, who represents the Serbian chairmanship this year, continues to support the ongoing regional initiatives and will encourage the OSCE, among others, to help strengthen bilateral relations between Belgrade and Tirana. Switzerland will also continue to contribute to OSCE projects that aim to promote the integration of minorities in the countries of the region.

Closer Cooperation between KOFF and FriEnt

From 21 to 22 January 2015, employees from the Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) met up with their counterparts from the German sister network FriEnt in Bonn. This event gave the teams the chance to get to know each other and exchange thoughts and ideas on the current challenges facing peacebuilding, networking and possible areas for cooperation (e.g. human rights and conflict transformation, or peace in Europe).

The convergence of the fragility and peace agendas in both the New Deal and in the plans for post-2015 was seen as an opportunity, yet also as a challenge. On the one hand, it offers a chance to take a more integrated approach to dealing with peace, development and security, with a focus on the contexts in which fragility and conflicts have delayed or thwarted the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. On the other hand, however, the teams observed that statebuilding, in particular, is being brought to the fore in this context, at the expense of other approaches to peacebuilding. The teams therefore agreed that there is a need for a new debate about a global peace agenda to supplement the discourse on fragility and security.
The increasing decentralisation of peacebuilding and development structures, which is pushing knowledge, experience and the relevant programme-related decision-making powers out into the field, is also making networking more difficult. Simply building capacity in Switzerland or Germany is not sufficient for improving work in the field. So how can we deal with this? Roundtable discussions and training sessions enable us to get closer to what is happening in the field, but they also require a lot of preparation, a good knowledge of the context concerned and plenty of time and effort to spend on follow-up activities, all without a local presence.

In spite of these challenges, the network structure is proving effective – even, or especially, with a highly diverse range of members – in terms of building bridges, “translating” between state and non-governmental actors and creating scope for building confidence. The key question when it comes to furthering this exchange is therefore whether and how networks like KOFF and FriEnt can and should collaborate with others to influence national and international peace policy.

### Police Officers and Nomads: Actors in Peace Processes in Benin

**swisspeace**
Marcel von Arx

**Links**
- swisspeace: Peacebuilding Analysis and Impact
- KOFF and Helvetas Manual: 3 steps for working in fragile and conflict-affected situations

Members of the police force very rarely take up the opportunity to participate in peacebuilding workshops. They simply do not have the time, and are often referred to as “hard-to-reach” actors. However, this is not the case in Parakou, in northern Benin, where the gendarmerie have been keen to undergo training on how to prevent and resolve conflicts as part of a regional training and education programme for pastoral communities, which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In this context, the SDC commissioned swisspeace to run a workshop in January 2015.

During the four-day event, 23 senior police officers, farmers’ representatives and officials involved in forestry and water management applied the concepts of positive and negative peace to their own real-life situations. They analysed the latent, visible and open conflicts which often arise between the farmers and nomadic people and identified the different types of violence involved – such as physical, structural, cultural or institutional violence.

Every year from November onwards, thousands of nomads travel across Benin’s borders with their herds in search of pasture and trade. Encounters with the heavily agricultural resident population often lead to conflicts. Using specific case studies, the police officers at the workshop drew up maps showing the actors involved and tried to find “connectors” and local capacities for peace, as well as “dividers” whose effects they want to curb. Based on their findings, they then produced an action plan, with the participants from civil society also adding their own thoughts and requirements. Now, as the transhumance season reaches its peak, it is time to put this plan into practice too.

The workshop in Parakou showed that traditional peace work and the tools it involves offer the best approach for the police, who drew extensively on the KOFF and Helvetas manual setting out three steps for working in fragile and conflict-affected situations.
Syria: Lessons from Peace & Conflict Studies?
swisspeace Summer School

What can peace and conflict theories contribute to understand the conflict dynamics in Syria? Which lessons can be drawn from this case to advance the academic field? Building on the main peace and conflict theories, swisspeace's 7-day summer school provides an overview of current academic and policy debates on peacebuilding and critically reflects their relevance for the Syrian context. Following an introduction to peace and conflict theories and the international peacebuilding architecture, participants will analyse the Syrian context and reflect on scenarios for future developments in the country. Who are the key actors, what are drivers and dynamics of the conflict? How do state and non-state actors interact and what role do international actors play in the conflict? How can the root causes of the conflict be addressed and how can peacebuilding and state formation processes be supported by outside actors? Participants will focus on specific topics relevant to the Syrian context including power-sharing, religion, and the responsibility to protect. Taking place on 29 June - 5 July at the swisspeace Academy in Basel, the summer school is designed for practitioners with an academic background, PhD-students and recent graduates and will be facilitated by leading scholars and experts on Syria. Registrations close on 30 April 2015.

Improving Leadership Skills within Peacebuilding: Ongoing Training from the GCSP

On behalf of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), working in partnership with Interpeace and with the support of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, staged the 6th “Senior-Level Course on Enhancing Leadership for Peacebuilding” in November 2014. International specialists in peacebuilding gathered for five days at the GCSP to compare their perceptions of sustainable peacebuilding, leadership, and to share their experiences. The 20 participants are all active within international organisations, governments and civil society in 20 countries across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. While knowledge about peacebuilding continues to grow, grey areas persist with regard to what makes it truly effective. Moreover, if the development of effective peace strategies is decisive, the personality of the specialists is also crucial for their implementation. However, the knowledge available on leadership in conflict situations can take time to permeate into the peacebuilding process. The course therefore focuses on various styles and leadership qualities that enable issues associated with peacebuilding to be managed effectively.

Following a review of the main strengths and weaknesses of the international system for peacebuilding, this course focuses on the management of group dynamics, their intercultural dimensions, as well as specific issues relating to leadership and gender. It also addresses leadership at an individual level in peacebuilding through the analysis of a personal challenge and an individual action plan. Practical and of immediate use for the participants, the course provides an atmosphere that is conducive to discussion and the exploration of various styles of leadership. This year, the theme of collaborative leadership in areas of armed conflict was one of the key areas of discussion. The presence of high-level experts
and experienced mentors allowed for individual coaching and, as such, a learning environment that was both dynamic and inspiring. Furthermore, various contributions, skills development work and practical exercises all enhanced the traditional plenary and group sessions.

International Partner Organisations

News from the international peacebuilding scene and KOFF partner organisations

Berghof Foundation
CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
Conciliation Resources
EIP
EPLO
forumZFD
FriEnt
Geneva Peacebuilding Platform
GIZ
GPPAC
International Alert
Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung

GPPAC

On the occasion of 21 September – the International Day of Peace – GPPAC organised a regional arts competition I Like Peace – Peace Is My Choice for pupils from the Western Balkans. Over 2000 pupil artworks were submitted, which makes the largest number of entries in the last five years, during which Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC) Serbia and NDC Montenegro have organised this competition. During the past decade NDC Serbia and NDC Montenegro, as a part of GPPAC in the Western Balkans, have been working on the regional peace education project involving schools and institutions from the region. The regional arts competition has been organised annually since 2010 in order to introduce pupils to the International Day of Peace and to include more schools in integrating peace education into regular school life. The 2014 competition goals were to contribute to digital violence prevention; encourage students to contribute to peacebuilding; contribute to people's security, tolerance and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. The winning artworks of the competition illustrate GPPAC's 2015 Peace Calendar which was promoted in Belgrade and Podgorica.

CDA Collaborative Learning Project

CDA will be facilitating the training Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) I, Introduction in collaboration with the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center. This training (June 1-5, 2015) is an intensive 5-day course, in which RPP concepts and frameworks are introduced and applied. This includes an approach to conflict analysis, formulation of programme goals, theories of change, and programme strategies, as well as an introduction to systems thinking in peacebuilding. The workshop is highly interactive and includes a series of small exercises and hands-on application of tools and approaches based on concrete programme examples and case studies. This training is well suited for programme managers and advisers who implement and advise others on peacebuilding programming.

EIP

swisspeace director Laurent Goetschel has been appointed as member of the Advisory Council of the European Institute of Peace (EIP). The EIP seeks to support peaceful solutions and strengthen Europe’s capacity for dialogue and mediation in order to prevent, manage and resolve international conflicts. Launched in May 2014, it is based in Brussels. The Advisory Council consists of up to 15 members who are representative of the broad practice of mediation and dialogue and members have been selected taking into consideration gender balance, European regional representation, and non-European representation. The Council has been set up to serve as a flexible, dynamic and thought-provoking council for the Institute.
Politorbis No. 58 – Distress and Crisis Abroad

Several times a year, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) publishes a journal on Swiss foreign policy featuring articles by experts. This is not an official FDFA communiqué, so it does not necessarily reflect the views of the department itself. The latest issue, the third to be released in 2014, focuses on foreign policy activities in the event of a crisis. Based on various case studies from the past 20 years, the articles shed light on Switzerland’s crisis management and consular protection at the turn of the 21st century. Organisations, tools and services relating to Swiss foreign policy are also explained in detail on a theoretical level.

Balkan Insight

Balkan Insight is the leading news website in the Western Balkans. It provides up-to-date news reports – categorised by country and region – relating to politics, society, economics, culture and lifestyle and is regarded as the only neutral news source that also offers information in English to international journalistic standards. Balkan Insights is a product of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, which was founded in 2005 and endeavours to promote public discourse in the Balkan region primarily through publications and media training. The network consists of a group of closely affiliated publishers and trainers. Its aim is to enable local journalists from the region to write in-depth articles on complex political, economic and social issues. The Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative also offers an interesting insight into the problem of dealing with the past. The purpose of this initiative, which is partly funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the EU, is to provide reliable, up-to-date information relating to war crimes and thus help improve public understanding of the conflicts that resulted from them.
Upcoming Events

4 March 2015

KOFF is organising a roundtable on “Working in and on Myanmar during a transitional year”. This first session launches a discussion to identify the issues and challenges of working through this transitional year and provides a reflection space for Swiss peace support actors. Further information and registration.

6 March - 3 April 2015

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) has been paving the way for peace and non-violence for an entire century. To celebrate its 100th anniversary, it is organising an exhibition in Bienne with the aim of highlighting the movement’s past and present as well as presenting the inspiring men and women behind the movement. The event will also feature various presentations and workshops. Further information.

16 March 2015

War, misery, violence – how are we supposed to respond to the events of our time and fight our feelings of anger and powerlessness in the face of what’s happening? At a conference in Bern on 16 March, the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (FSPC) is inviting men and women to take the floor who are committed to peace, respect and human dignity in their day-to-day lives. By having them share their experience, the event aims to encourage solidarity, resistance and courage in spite of current events. Further information.

23 March 2015

The media often tend to present religions as the source of numerous conflicts. In an attempt to upend this notion and to highlight the sometimes crucial role played by religion for the peaceful integration and coexistence of people, Mission 21 is organising a colloquium about the role of religion in peacebuilding. The event will take place in Basel on 23 March. Further information and registration.

24 March/23 April 2015

swisspeace is organising an information event on its postgraduate education programme at 6.30 p.m. on 24 March (in Bern) and 23 April (in Basel). Further information and registration by 20 March/20 April.

6 April 2015

Several KOFF member organisations will join members of the civil society in this year’s Easter March in Bern, which will take place on 6 April 2015 (Easter Monday). This year’s motto will be “Peace makes room – make room for peace”. Further information.

24 - 25 April 2015

When dialogue and negotiation fail to resolve deeply entrenched conflicts, drama and performance can facilitate understanding and be an innovative and sensible alternative to traditional mediation by allowing each stakeholder to assume a different role. The Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding (ICP) has conceived a two-day training course in Bern dedicated to this approach. Further information and contact.

29 April - 1 May 2015

The KOFF training course on “Managing Programs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations” explores what it means to work in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, what it needs and how it could be done. It provides an overview of current discourses, gives policy guidance and familiarises participants with the concepts and application of conflict and context sensitivity. The course will take place in Bern from 29 April to 1 May. Further information and registration until 8 April 2015.

April - July 2015

The Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding (ICP) is organising a training course for professional mediators which is focused on strengthening personal creativity and dealing with contradictions. The course is made up of three modules, taking place between April and July 2015 in Bern. Further information and contact.

4 - 10 May 2015

Finding a way to deal with a violent past following events such as civil war, the end of an authoritarian regime or occupation, is often argued to be the basis for lasting peace, democracy and rule of law. The postgraduate course in “Dealing with the Past” focuses on the potentials and challenges of designing a dealing with the
past process, and the ways in which actors can work together to ensure effective policy decision-making. Further information and registration.

Steps for Peace is organising a course in “Shaping and experiencing cultural memory” that focuses on dealing with the past and cultural memory in Germany and shows how different processes of cultural memory in their negative and positive aspects can be experienced. It is aimed at international and national multipliers from crisis regions and transformational countries who are focusing on dealing with the past and cultural memory. Further information.

The women’s rights and relief organisation medica mondiale offers trainings on development policy for experts from NGOs and governmental institutions as well as for academics and activists dealing in their work with the direct or indirect consequences of violence. The trainings aim to strengthen their capacities to cope with stress, trauma and gender specific aspects of violence and to promote resilience on an individual, project or organisational level. Further information.

The Institute of Federalism organises a two-week Practitioner’s Course on Sub-national Governance in Fribourg, Switzerland. This course is designed to support subnational actors in accomplishing their challenging tasks in demanding contexts, often exposed to scarcity, diversity and conflict. It is intended for officials and professionals working in administrations or parliaments of provinces, states or regions in multilevel settings. Further information and registration by 6 April 2015.

On the KOFF website you can find more information about upcoming roundtables and events organised by KOFF.