

The OSCE's commitment to environmental protection

Source: On the frontlines of peace - OSCE in action- Vienna: OSCE [Prod.], 2005. Vienna, OSCE. - VIDEO (00:03:29, Colour, Original Sound Track).

OSCE Press and Public Information Section, Kaerntner Ring 5-7, 1010 Vienna, Austria.

Copyright: Transcription CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_osce_s_commitment_to_environmental_protection-en-214fc879-93df-4944-b99a-1e9722e28fde.html



Last updated: 04/07/2016

The OSCE's commitment to environmental protection

[Commentator] Danger's all around in Mailuu Suu. You can't see it, but it's there: in the market, in the lanes, in the houses, in the water. Half a century ago, this part of Kyrgyzstan was the uranium capital of Central Asia. From its mines came the first Soviet atom bomb. What is left is a time bomb: two million cubic metres of radioactive waste. Larisa Krotova believes that's what gave her cancer. Her job used to be issuing death certificates. For one woman in two, she says, the cause was cancer. Double the normal cancer rate, high rates of anaemia, stillbirths, miscarriages, glandular problems.

[Robert Mangham] It's quite clear that this is not just an environmental problem; this is a human rights violation. If you look at the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been signed by every country in the world apart from two, there's a very clear human rights issue: the right to a clean environment.

[Commentator] Back in this mine, radiation is five times the danger level.

[Tilek Burhanovich Akambaev] I believe the problem should be highlighted. It is necessary to properly inform our population and arrange educational seminars and workshop for them as well as teach them how to act in such situations. Therefore, I support your projects.

[Commentator] One such programme fostered by the OSCE has been warning people their town may be poisoning them. But many are still oblivious to the danger; they fish in the river, and their families eat the catch. Poor people use what they can get — from a rock to a piece of rusty cable — and often build the risk right into their home. 'It's okay,' he says, 'The river washes away the radiation.' Well, in a sense, it does, and that's another problem: landslides, quakes and flooding can dump more waste into the river. Ten kilometres from here, it crosses into Uzbekistan and then Tajikistan.

[Robert Mangham] The water system that provides irrigation water, drinking water to a population of between 10 to 12 million people living in the Fergana Valley. This is the bread basket of Central Asia.

[Commentator] These troubled waters could set one country against another. But what can people do who earn an average 300 dollars a year?

[Robert Mangham] Their voices are lost; they are not connected politically.

[Commentator] But the OSCE *is* connected — in the field and in the corridors of power — and its voice is not lost.

[Robert Mangham] So we can actually see with our own eyes, hear from real people on the ground, what the problems are. And I think we are in a very privileged position to take the issues to the policy makers.