In his article 'Human Rights Monitoring and the CSCE', Martin Uden described the origins of the proposal made at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in the autumn of 1993 that the CSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) should be able to bring violations of human rights commitments to the attention of the CSCE's decision-making bodies, drawing on the information that it receives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). He explained how his proposal was taken up by the delegations of CSCE participating states in Vienna, and discussed prior to the meeting of the CSCE Council in Rome (30 November - 1 December 1993). At Rome, a right of initiative for the ODIHR to raise cases of non-implementation of human rights commitments did not meet agreement. Instead, it was decided that the CSCE's decision-making bodies should consider human dimension issues on a regular basis, that the ODIHR could provide information in support of these discussions, and that the ODIHR could receive information from NGOs with experience in the human dimension field.

As Martin Uden pointed out, this ambiguous formula left room for the ODIHR to monitor human rights issues on its own initiative. But it did not make clear how human dimension issues would be taken up by the CSCE's decision-making bodies (the Permanent Committee meeting every week in Vienna, and the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting quarterly in Prague). Martin Uden highlighted this weak point in the decision; for the Permanent Committee to discuss human dimension issues, participating states would have to overcome their reticence to cast the first stone by raising cases of non-implementation in other states.

The Permanent Committee in 1994
This proved prophetic. In 1994 the Permanent Committee developed an ongoing consultation among CSCE delegations in Vienna on European security issues. Discussion was frank and decision-orientated. The Permanent Committee took over from the CSO as the forum for conducting the CSCE's regular business in conflict prevention and crisis management. But human dimension issues were a rare feature of discussions in Vienna. The reports of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) although directed at conflict prevention, did focus on the rights of members of minority groups. CSCE missions sometimes reported on human dimension-related topics (for example, the dispute over the use of the Cyrillic alphabet in schools in eastern Moldo-

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1. This article reflects the personal views of the author.
And occasionally, participating states did raise the implementation of human rights commitments in other states. The Nordic countries, for example, used a Permanent Committee meeting to request Turkey to consider invoking the Human Dimension Mechanism. But these were exceptions, not the rule. In contrast with the Cold War CSCE, when human rights cases in one bloc of countries were regularly raised by members of the other bloc, since the fall of the Berlin Wall participating states have been reluctant to chastise each other for failing to implement CSCE human dimension commitments. Discussion of the human dimension in the Permanent Committee was therefore rather thin.

While the ODIHR continued to collect information from NGOs, to provide new democracies with advice on democratic institutions and advise CSCE missions on human dimension aspects of their work, this rarely came to the attention of the Permanent Committee. It was only towards the end of 1994 that the Director of the ODIHR was invited to report to the Committee on the Offices’s activities. This was not an invitation to report on inadequacies of implementation of human dimension commitments by participating states, but merely to update delegations on the Offices’s activities. Many still viewed implementation issues as lying beyond the ODIHR’s competence.

The Budapest Review Conference
When the Budapest Review Conference opened in October 1994 several delegations came forward with proposals to improve the discussion of human dimension issues in the CSCE’s decision-making bodies. There were three different approaches:

a) The Swiss delegation suggested the creation of a special ad hoc group to discuss human dimension issues. They envisaged that the results of the discussions would be passed on to the Permanent Committee. They argued that this would encourage participating states to include human dimension experts in their delegations in Vienna. They also proposed a panel of experts whose opinion could be sought on cases of non-implementation;

b) The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic tabled a proposal which was very similar to the one formulated at the 1993 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. They suggested an expanded role for the ODIHR in monitoring the implementation of human rights commitments, giving it the possibility to initiate the assessment of particular situations and propose follow-up action, including the despatch of fact-finding missions and on-site visits. Using the information at its disposal, the ODIHR would bring the Permanent Committee’s attention to cases of non-implementation of CSCE commitments;

c) The European Union and the four candidate countries (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Austria) proposed a variation on this theme. They suggested that the Chairman-in-Office (CIO) should be given the responsibility for raising cases of non-implementation in the Permanent Committee, but that he/she would do so on the basis of information provided by the ODIHR (among others — CSCE