PAE REACT provides personnel and personnel-related services to advance OSCE’s democratization, human rights and rule of law missions.

In April 2017, PAE won the Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams (REACT) IV contract, PAE’s fourth consecutive win since program inception in 2000. The program is a three-way relationship between PAE, Department of State (DoS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The DoS sets the political goals for and provides funding to the OSCE; PAE operationalizes U.S. foreign policy via OSCE; and OSCE provides organizational structure for civilian experts in their assigned country.

“We identify the best American experts to assist fragile and transitioning countries to increase the economic and physical stability of their region,” said REACT Program Manager Shannon Simrell. “REACT is a part of the solution.”

Hiring Experts to Change the World

Worldwide events are changing the security landscape, causing OSCE to adapt its mission over the past few years. “We are recruiting for positions OSCE never needed before,” said Shannon. “We are increasingly called upon to recruit satellite imagery experts, ceasefire observers, and counterterrorism experts.” With environmental concerns in conflict zones, money laundering to finance terrorism and the rise of violent extremism, REACT recruits to keep pace with evolving needs.

OSCE Monitors and Reports Environmental Risks

The OSCE deployed a Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine on March 21, 2014 when the Ukraine government appealed for support after the Russian Federation annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Since then, PAE has recruited over 125 monitoring officers, with 72 experts currently in country.

OSCE recently asked one such expert, REACT Monitoring Officer Mary Aguirre, to spearhead an initiative to identify industrial facilities and other sites in the conflict zone that pose environmental concerns. The initiative is consistent with the OSCE’s mandate to monitor and report on security and human rights issues because everyone has the right to live safely.

“With 15 years of experience in environmental law back in the U.S., I am finding a comfort zone here in Ukraine,” said Mary. “Despite the challenges and hazards of working in the conflict zone, I feel strongly about what I am doing. Environmental risks need to be examined and addressed so we can mitigate the hazards posed to monitors and communities.”

Regional Cooperation for Anti-Money Laundering

Because of the intrinsic link between security and good economic governance, the OSCE supports implementing international standards and commitments to combat the financing of terrorism. PAE recently recruited Iris Pilika to serve as Program Officer in the Economic Governance Unit at OSCE Secretariat in Vienna to focus on anti-money laundering (AML) and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT).

“I focus on projects aimed at enhancing regional cooperation in AML/CFT in the Western Balkans,” said Iris. “I also support the AML/CFT national risk assessment of the Republic of Moldova.” Additionally, Iris heads a workshop for the Moldovan Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and other European FIUs to foster closer cooperation in financial investigations and money laundering cases.
The OSCE is committed to countering violent extremism (CVE) and radicalization that leads to terrorism. “Our interconnected world means we need comprehensive tools and approaches to address and combat violent extremism,” said Shannon. “REACT experts impact national policies and also awareness at the local level.”

OSCE has a presence in Kosovo, where a disproportionately high number of ISIS recruits per capita originate. PAE Senior Democratization Officer for the OSCE mission in Kosovo James Lyon designed and implemented a three-tier CVE prevention program that he piloted in Kosovo’s two highest at-risk municipalities.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, William Langan is OSCE’s Head of Security Cooperation and a REACT expert who recently coordinated and synchronized the first deployment of an OSCE multinational and multiagency mobile training team. “I lead an inclusive whole-of-society approach to countering radicalization and violent extremism by working closely with today’s youth,” said William. “Supporting those on the margins of society builds their resilience and self-confidence and encourages critical thinking. We are working to strip acts of violence of their allure in the name of divisive ideologies.”

PAE’s response to the 1998 Balkans conflict launched REACT.

The Department of State wanted to help Bosnia stand up their first democratic election and needed election observers to monitor the process. PAE quickly vetted hundreds of resumes to hire and deploy 80 election observers. Afterwards, the OSCE recognized the need to replicate the process elsewhere and put out a call for proposals. PAE won the contract and has held it ever since.

PAE has consistently gone beyond contract requirements in finding and providing well-qualified candidates for OSCE vacancies.” – 2017 CPAR

**Going Above and Beyond**

PAE’s skill in recruiting experts for OSCE missions is well documented. In the March 2017 REACT Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPAR), DoS noted: “PAE has consistently gone beyond contract requirements in finding and providing well-qualified candidates for OSCE vacancies …. The U.S. delegation to the OSCE is regularly complimented on the quality of its U.S. experts (who are selected by PAE), and our experts enjoy a superb reputation.”

“My small program team knows what the OSCE needs, and together we develop effective tools to connect highly-motivated experts with the challenging positions the OSCE needs to fill,” said Shannon. “We are part of the process of success.”

**More than 4,900 REACT Experts Deployed to More than 30 Countries Since 2000**

PAE Senior Democratization Officer for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo James Lyon moderated a countering violent extremism discussion in the eastern Kosovo municipality of Han i Elezit/Elez Han.