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President Alcee L. Hastings addresses the Council of Europe PA

Invited by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Congressman Alcee L. Hastings addressed the first part of the 2005 Ordinary Session of the PACE in Strasbourg on 24 January. President Hastings also had a programme of meetings in Strasbourg with Senior officials from the different institutions of the Council of Europe.

In his address to the Plenary President Hastings congratulated the new President of the PACE, Mr. René van der Linden on his election as President for the next three years, and praised the important achievements of the outgoing President Mr. Peter Schieder. President Hastings outlined the important cooperation between the PACE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on election observation, parliamentary troikas, and the parliamentary dimension of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe.

President Hastings underlined the importance of further developing transatlantic links. "The United States, Canada and Europe need each other, and in order to improve the transatlantic relationship we must work to rebuild the foundation of confidence on which our partners rests. We must find ways to pursue our common values and our common interests. I take it on myself, being charged with added responsibility as the OSCE Assembly President and also as a United States Congressperson, to ensure that there is better cooperation with the Council of Europe" Mr. Hastings said.

President Hastings also held meetings in Strasbourg with senior officials from the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly, exchanging views on current issues and analyzing prospects for enhancing coordination and cooperation between the two institutions. President Hastings met with the President of the European Court for Human Rights, Mr. Luzius Wildhaber, and with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Terry Davis. He also held extensive talks with the outgoing president of the PACE Mr. Peter Scheider and with the newly elected President Mr. René van der Linden. President Hastings and the staff from the Secretariat met with the senior staff of the PACE including Secretary General Bruno Haller and Director General Mateo Sorinas.

President Hastings had a bilateral meeting with the leadership of the Russian Delegation to the PACE, Mr. Konstantin Kosachev, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Russian Duma, and Mr. Mikhail Margelov, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Council of the Russian Federation.

During his official visit to the Council of Europe President Hastings was accompanied by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Programme Officer Tina Schøn and Presidential Adviser Gustavo



Pallarés. Secretary General Oliver held meetings with his counterpart in the PACE, Mr. Bruno Haller, to follow up on the several areas in which the OSCE PA and the PACE cooperate. Ms. Schøn attended the debate held on the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.



PA Vice-President Tone Tingsgaard visits the International Secretariat

In conjunction with a meeting at the Nordic Council in Copenhagen, Vice-President Tone Tingsgaard visited the International Secretariat on 27 January 2005 where she met with Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev as well as Programme Officers Tina Schøn and Paul LeGendre. Mrs. Tingsgaard and the staff discussed future OSCE PA activities, particularly related to the gender issue and the Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia (Georgia). They also discussed preparations for the Standing Committee and the Winter Meeting as well as a proposal for discussion of Human Trafficking in the Third Committee.