

President Lennmarker visits Canada

OSCE PA President Goran Lennmarker paid an official visit to Canada from 10 to 12 March, with meetings in both Toronto and in Ottawa.

The President met with senior governmental officials and parliamentarians including Prime Minister Stephen Harper; the Speaker of the House of Commons, Peter Milliken; and Stéphane Dion, Leader of the Official Opposition.

President Lennmarker's visit included substantive discussions with the Minister of National Defense, Peter MacKay, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Bernier. Mr. Lennmarker reiterated the importance of the transatlantic link in the OSCE, applauding the active role that Canada plays in the Parliamentary Assembly. He also stressed the importance of reform of the OSCE and encouraged parliamentary input and oversight at the international as well as at the domestic level.

Discussion also focused on developments in Afghanistan, and President Lennmarker stressed the important role being played there by Canada. The President intends to visit Afghanistan in June. There was also lively discussion regarding the role of the OSCE in Kosovo.



Canada's Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier in talks with OSCE PA President Goran Lennmarker.

The visit was hosted by Senator Consiglio Di Nino, Head of the Canadian delegation to the OSCE PA, and Senator Jerahmiel Grafstein, Vice-President of the Assembly.

While in Ottawa, Mr. Lennmarker led a seminar discussion with graduate students at the University of Ottawa Graduate Seminar in Globalization and Governance.

The visit by the OSCE PA delegation also set the stage for the OSCE PA Fall Meetings to be held in Toronto

from 18 to 21 September 2008. The OSCE PA Conference will focus on the topic of 'The OSCE in an Open World: Trade, Migration, and Security.' Senators Di Nino and Grafstein outlined the extensive preparations being undertaken by the Canadian Parliament, and President Lennmarker expressed his confidence that the September meetings would be very successful.

President Lennmarker was accompanied by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Programme/Press Officer Andreas Baker, and Senior Advisor Ann-Sofi Lindenbaum from the Swedish Parliament.

New Regional Cooperation Council meets in Sofia, Bulgaria

Roberto Battelli, head of the Slovenian PA delegation and OSCE PA's Special Representative on South East Europe, represented the Assembly at the last meeting on 27 February of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which at the same time constituted the first meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council in Sofia, Bulgaria.

At this event, the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact, Erhard Busek, handed over the responsibility for regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe to the newly formed Council and its Secretary General Hido Biscevic.

The foreign ministers of the South East Europe Corporation Process, ministers and other high representatives from

associated countries and of international organizations called the Stability Pact a success. The overall socio-economic situation as well as the security in the region has improved and the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region is well on track.

In his statement, Mr. Battelli commended Dr. Busek, the staff of the Stability Pact and its member states for the work done and expressed his hope for a fruitful cooperation in the new framework. He also stressed that the PA stands ready to continue the work done so far in the framework of the Parliamentary Troika of the Stability Pact.

Ambassador Andreas Nothelle from the Vienna PA Liaison Office accompanied the Special Representative to Sofia.