



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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Report on the 3rd Annual Winter Meeting

Vienna

19-20 February 2004

Introduction



This publication summarizes the Third Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Vienna from 19-20 February 2004. The meeting was attended by 250 parliamentarians from 48 participating States. The meeting was also attended by delegations from the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, Israel, Jordan and Morocco, as well as observers from the Assembly of the Western European Union, the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The first day of the Winter Meeting included a Joint Session of the Assembly's three General Committees followed by meetings of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security and the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment. The Joint Session was addressed by OSCE PA President Bruce George, the President of the Austrian Nationalrat Andreas Khol

and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Solomon Passy. The Session also included the presentation of the 2004 OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

On the second day of the Winter Meeting, the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions met, followed by a Closing Joint Session of the three General Committees, which was addressed by OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis.

The February Winter Meeting is the second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar, surpassed only by the Annual Session held each year in July. The Winter Meeting serves as an additional opportunity for the three General Committees to be briefed on current OSCE developments by senior OSCE officials who also take questions from the gathered parliamentarians. Committee work during the Winter Meeting includes discussion on draft reports and draft resolutions in preparation for the upcoming Annual Session.



Standing Committee Meeting

The Winter Meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations. OSCE PA President Bruce George presented a summary of his activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Standing Committee in Rome in October 2003. He emphasized that he will continue to make every effort to increase the co-operation between the governmental structures of the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly, which provides the OSCE with a firm democratic foundation.

On behalf of Treasurer Jerry Grafstein, Secretary General Spencer Oliver informed Members about the positive assessment from the KPMG External Auditors. According to the distributed Report of the Treasurer, the Assembly continues to operate within budget and the Report commends the Secretary General for his sound financial management of the Secretariat. The Secretary General continued by giving a summary of the activities of the Assembly's International Secretariat during the past six months. He highlighted the fact that the Secretariat had managed to set up the new OSCE PA website just before the commencement of the Winter Meeting.

The Standing Committee reviewed the results of the November 2003 OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht and heard reports on election moni-

toring and the work of the Assembly's Ad Hoc Committees on Transparency and Accountability and Moldova, Abkhazia and Belarus, as well as a report of the Special Representative on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The Standing Committee approved two amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE PA. Rule 23 was amended to clarify the procedures concerning the postponement of items in the Plenary, Standing Committee and the General Committees. Rule 34 was amended to provide the General Committees more flexibility in the election of their Officers.

The Standing Committee also briefly discussed a proposed amendment to Rule 20 concerning the number of supplementary items at Annual Sessions and procedures at the Standing Committee in these questions but decided to postpone this matter for further consideration at the proposal of the President.

President Bruce George announced that under Rule 8(3), he had appointed Congressman Christopher Smith, Head of the US Delegation to the OSCE PA, as his Special Representative on Human Trafficking. The President also announced that Belgium would host the Annual Session in 2006 and that Malta would host the Fall Meetings in 2006.





First Joint Session of the Three General Committees

Opening Remarks and Address by Bruce George, President of the OSCE PA

President George welcomed participants to the Third Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, expressing his satisfaction with the excellent turnout for the meeting. He thanked the Speaker of the Australian Parliament, the Chairman-in-Office and the OSCE Secretary General for their support of the Assembly's work. The President recalled the concrete objectives behind the establishment of the OSCE PA Winter Meetings three years ago: interaction with the governmental dimension of the OSCE, follow-up to the Assembly's decisions taken in Annual Sessions, and further opportunities for dialogue and interaction on OSCE topics and issues.

The relations with the governmental side are now on good track, said the President, who used his address to the Permanent Council on the Rotterdam Session and the feedback from most of the national delegations as concrete examples of this fact.

President George also noted that the OSCE Secretary General briefed the Standing Committee in Rome on the OSCE budget proposal, and the Assembly was able to provide helpful comments to the Chairmanship for the consideration of the budget.

In his address, the President emphasized that in this new world the OSCE and the OSCE PA must stand ready to respond to new threats and chal-

lenges. He expressed his belief that the theme of the forthcoming Annual Session in Edinburgh - "Co-operation and Partnership: Coping with New Security Threats" - is an excellent topic to complement the new "OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Stability and Security in the Twenty-First Century", adopted by the OSCE Ministerial last year. He also elaborated on the main content of this strategy upon which the Assembly can build its recommendations and provide parliamentary input.

The President continued by stressing the need for more visibility of the OSCE's work among citizens. He also expressed concern about the lack of decisions being made in the OSCE due to the consensus rule. President George stressed the need to continue encouraging the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to use the framework and mechanisms of the OSCE, especially those devoted to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, as a model for enhancing security, promoting co-operation and protecting human rights in the region.

Finally, the President mentioned the importance of contacts between parliamentarians and OSCE Missions in the field and the parliamentary input in election monitoring missions. "The monitoring of recent elections in Georgia, Russia and Serbia has proven that the political expertise, credibility, and visibility that parliamentarians bring to the monitoring missions, together with our excellent co-operation with the ODIHR, is essential to the process."



Address by Dr. Andreas Khol President of the Austrian Nationalrat



In his welcoming remarks, President Khol emphasized that the Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is an instrument for intensified dialogue and co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE. Throughout his address, President Khol asserted that global security is not possible without the protection of human rights.

He welcomed the fact that efforts to combat trafficking are receiving more attention. With the adoption of the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings the OSCE has the instruments for an intensified combat against this “modern form of slavery.” President Khol urged the OSCE to intensify its efforts to deal with anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination. In particular, within the context of new threats - where too often there are attempts to define conflicts in religious or ethnic terms - these tendencies need to be strongly opposed.

Dr. Khol concluded by expressing his appreciation for the indispensable “concrete work” of OSCE parliamentarians and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights during election monitoring missions.

Address by Solomon Passy OSCE Chairman-in-Office

In his address, the Chairman-in-Office (C-i-O) outlined the main priorities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship “in two simple words: implementation and continuity.” Implementation implies that the full energy and attention of the Chairmanship will be focused on the implementation of decisions made in Maastricht. Examples are the implementation of the new OSCE Comprehensive Strategy that addresses threats to security in the 21st Century, proceeds with the new Economic Strategy, builds on the efforts of the previous Chairmanship in the field of anti-trafficking - including establishing a special mechanism against trafficking within the Secretariat - and continues with the implementation of all different OSCE commit-

ments in the struggle against the on-going menace of international terrorism.

Regarding the second notion of “continuity,” the C-i-O stressed that this means cohesion between the different Chairmanships. “The last thing this Organization needs is the introduction of new priorities, new strategies, and new initiatives by every new Chairman-in-Office. This Chairmanship will focus on our Maastricht tasks, and build upon the priorities set by the Netherlands in 2003.”

After elaborating on the different priorities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship, Minister Passy also reviewed some of the regional issues the OSCE is faced with, including Georgia, Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh, Central Asia and South Eastern Europe. Regarding Georgia, the C-i-O praised the “essential role” that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has played and will continue to play in the democratic development of the country. In this context he expressed his pleasure that OSCE PA President Bruce George had again agreed



to lead the upcoming OSCE short-term election monitoring mission in Georgia.

The C-i-O concluded by saying that “*the Bulgarian Chairmanship intends to further promote the mutual political support between the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly, which considerably strengthened its role as an important OSCE Institution under the able leadership of its President, my friend of over ten years, the Honourable Bruce George.*”





Discussions on the Consensus Rule

The Question and Answer Sessions after the addresses of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and the OSCE Secretary General were dominated by discussions on the OSCE Consensus Rule. The C-i-O, Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Solomon Passy, said:

"If I have to define one single most important issue to address in the reform of the OSCE, it is the consensus principle. The consensus principle is blocking the work of the Organization. I know very well how important it is to have the agreement of 55 sovereign states, 55 sovereign governments, because their agreement makes it politically binding for their future behaviour.

But nevertheless, the world is changing. We witness the changes in the European Union. We witness the changes in NATO. We know the new Constitution of the European Union according to which, the matters to which consensus is required have been significantly reduced.

Therefore, I would say that if there is one single thing that we all have to address, this is the reform of the consensus principle. And it is a very good question on how the Parliamentary

Assembly can help. You may be very helpful if each of you parliamentarians try to urge your governments to agree. It is, I have to tell, not a popular proposal and I'm not the first to suggest it.

It was suggested, if I'm not mistaken, ten years ago by Germany, then it was supported by my predecessor, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. I know that I will support it and I know that my Slovenian successor will support it but we have to work to change this principle in order for the OSCE to survive in the future."

"... I would like to be absolutely blunt. I didn't speak about consensus minus one. I just spoke about abolishing the consensus and personally speaking, I would be very happy with simple majority."

OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis expressed his opinion that the consensus principle will work if the participating States take it seriously and if it is based on transparency. He agreed that there are certain areas where the consensus principle is not working and mentioned staff appointments as an example.



OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy

“By honouring the work of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), one of the best-recognized media freedom watchdogs in the world, we are simultaneously drawing attention to the thousands of cases of media freedom abuses which CPJ has vigorously investigated, and responded to, since its inception over twenty years ago.” So said the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Bruce George, in presenting the 2004 OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to the CPJ at the first day of the Assembly’s Winter Meeting in Vienna.

Since 1996, the USD 20,000 Prize has been awarded by the Assembly to journalists who have promoted the OSCE principles of human rights, democracy and the free flow of information through their work.

Bruce George also said that in awarding the Prize to CPJ, the Assembly is also contributing to the efforts of the Committee to create an *“environment more conducive to honest, responsible and fearless journalism.”*

In her acceptance speech, Ann Cooper, Executive Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, said that by honouring the work of an international press freedom organization, the OSCE PA has sent *“each of the journalists we defend a powerful message: that they are not alone in their dedication to a free press.”* She added that the honour also sends a very powerful message to repressive governments. *“It is a message that some of your own governments need to hear: that democracy depends on a free press.”*

Previous winners of the OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy: Adam Michnik, Reporters sans frontières, Timothy Garton Ash, Andrei Babitsky, Georgiy Gongadze and José Luis López de Lacalle; Friedrich Orter and Pavel Sheremet; Anna Politkovskaya.

The annual Journalism Prize has been made possible by the dedicated and generous assistance of the following donors: Bertelsman AG, Germany; Bonnier Group, Sweden; and Schibsted ASA, Norway.



General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



The Chairman of the Committee on Political Affairs and Security (First Committee), Goran Lennmarker, opened the session by stating that the dismantling of European barriers brought with it a responsibility to prevent the construction of barriers

against those outside of Europe. Following his opening remarks, Mr. Lennmarker introduced four guest speakers, the Foreign Minister of Andorra, His Excellency Mr. Juli Minoves-Triquell, the Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Ivo Petrov, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador William Hill, and the Senior Police Adviser, Mr. Richard Monk.

Address by Juli Minoves-Triquell Foreign Minister of Andorra



The Foreign Minister of Andorra, His Excellency Juli Minoves-Triquell, presented Andorra's long history as a positive model of democracy and diplomacy. The Minister expressed his hope that the work of the Forum for Security Co-

operation be better advertised among the organs of the OSCE and other international organizations. He went on to say that anti-terrorism, arms control and confidence building measures are the key aspects of security and remain the aims of the OSCE Member States.

Address by Ivo Petrov OSCE Permanent Council Chairman

The Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Ivo Petrov, briefed Committee Members on the current activities of the Permanent Council and expressed his regret that the Council had lost some of its dynamism with the enlargement of the EU and the equivalent increase in the number of countries within the Council speaking with

one voice. He went on to stress that the Council does not operate in a vacuum but instead must respond to the changing demands of the participating states. He stressed that the future of the Council will involve responses to new threats to security.



Address by William Hill Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova

The Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador William Hill, briefed the Committee on the activities of the Mission with regards to military security aspects. He also detailed the difficulties encountered and the achievements accomplished. He stated that before the withdrawal of troops can be achieved the elimination of military equipment and ammunition must be verified by OSCE inspections. The Ambassador noted that an increased political will has increased the speed of withdrawal and this process should be completed within six months.



Address by Richard Monk Senior Police Adviser

The OSCE Senior Police Adviser, Richard Monk, expressed his opinion that in Central Asia, as in other regions, officials do not often give anti-corruption measures the priority they should. Mr. Monk went on to outline the need for term programmes enabling strategic development through investment in infrastructure. He also called both for greater donor co-operation and for the establishment within the OSCE of a pool of international police and police experts.



Address by Clifford Lincoln Rapporteur of the First Committee



The Rapporteur of the First Committee, Clifford Lincoln, presented a general outline of the central ideas that will be featured in his Report to the Annual Session in Edinburgh, July 2004. Mr. Lincoln emphasized those issues which he believes constitute a new threat to security. In particular, he stressed the need for combative measures against terrorism, regional conflicts, insecure borders, weapons proliferation and the lack of democratic control of armed forces. He went on to say that the OSCE suffers structural defects resulting from secret consensus voting rules as well as problems of the secondment staffing system and a gender imbalance.

Discussion

During the subsequent debate, delegates expressed their general support for the ideas of Mr. Lincoln. Consideration was given to the need for multilateralism and co-operation in efforts against terrorism and cross-border criminality. The need to elaborate new legal documents on Human Rights was also mentioned. The issues of national minorities and ethnic conflict were raised.

There was also a call from members of the Committee to increase support to democratization efforts and to foster better co-operation between the civil and military components of the OSCE crisis response.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Lincoln thanked the members for their positive input and assured them that all suggestions would be considered prior to the forthcoming Annual Session in Edinburgh.





General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment



The Chairman of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment (Second Committee), Mr. Benjamin Cardin, opened the meeting by welcoming all members and stressing the importance of the economic and environmental dimensions of the OSCE. Chairman Cardin referred to the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht, which offers a helpful framework for this effort and coincides with the Assembly's theme for the Annual Session in Edinburgh.

In assessing what strategies the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly may want to undertake, Mr. Cardin urged co-operation to enhance development, security and stability, and the strengthening of good governance ensuring sustainable development and protecting the environment.

Debate on the Economic Situation in the Republic of Georgia



A panel discussion on the economic situation in the Republic of Georgia was the first item on the meeting agenda. Nino Burjanadze, former acting President of Georgia and Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and Ambassador Roy Reeve, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, analysed the difficulties faced by the Georgian economy and introduced suggestions on the OSCE's role in assisting economic development.

Mrs. Burjanadze also outlined the economic situation facing the Republic of Georgia. During her tenure as Acting President of the Republic after the "Rose Revolution" of November 2003, she had to

face extremely difficult economic and financial difficulties. In her speech, Mrs. Burjanadze addressed such problems as tax collection and corruption and included concrete examples of daily economic hardships in Georgia.

Corruption remains at the core of the economic problems in the country. The new government has voiced a full political commitment to combat corruption through institutional reforms that should destroy the basis for corruption. Mrs. Burjanadze emphasized that Georgia is in urgent need of new tax and customs codes, new laws on the State Treasury and renewed legislation on bankruptcy. Georgia will also focus on the preparation and implementation of the regions' socio-economic post-conflict rehabilitation programmes.

Ambassador Roy Reeve, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, outlined the activities and priorities of his office. The Mission was established in 1992 with the objective of promoting negotiations aiming at the peaceful political settlement of conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.



Ambassador Reeve briefed parliamentarians on the general mandate of the Mission, focusing on the border monitoring mission to observe and report on movements across the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. Ambassador Reeve also referred to the OSCE Georgia Elections Assistance Programme, which was set up in Maastricht to administer the special funds for the presidential elections held in January and for the forthcoming parliamentary elections of 28 March. OSCE States have donated 1 million Euros to cover the administrative costs of the parliamentary elections. Under an agreement signed in Tbilisi with the Georgian Finance Minister, Zurab Nogaideli, the amount will fund basic election administration operational costs and support the Central Election Commission with resources to run the elections in an effective manner.

**Address by Marcin Swiecicki,
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and
Environmental Activities**



Mr. Swiecicki briefed the Committee on major developments of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. In his speech, the Co-ordinator referred to the "OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht. This is an essential document as it addresses such challenges and threats as "deepening economic and social disparities, lack of rule of law, weak governance, corruption, widespread poverty and high unemployment are among the factors that contribute to global threats such as terrorism, violent extremism, trans-national crime, and also illegal economic activities, including money-laundering, trafficking of all kinds, and illegal migration". The new OSCE Strategy Document outlines responses, actions and particular guidance in order to successfully tackle these challenges and threats. Mr. Swiecicki informed parliamentarians about the numerous activities of his office leading to the 12th OSCE Economic Forum to be held in Prague in May. The Forum will discuss the "New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Co-operation". Two preparatory seminars for this Forum have been held. One held in Yerevan analysed

how Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises can be further promoted. A second seminar in Dublin discussed the question of how foreign and domestic investments can be stimulated. A third seminar will address the issue of "Human Resources for Developing a Market Economy". Mr. Swiecicki hoped for more active participation by Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in these seminars and in the Forum.

**Address by Leonid Ivanchenko
Rapporteur of the Second Committee**

Mr. Leonid Ivanchenko, Rapporteur of the Second Committee, introduced his ideas for the report and draft resolution for the Edinburgh Annual Session of the Assembly addressing the topic chosen for the session: "Co-operation and Partnership: Coping with New Security Threats". His text will focus on two general issues: repercussions of European integration processes and the implications of economic globalization focusing on practical strategies for addressing these trends as well as addressing current and emerging challenges and threats in the economic and environmental sphere.



Mr. Ivanchenko agreed to receive proposals and ideas from members of the Committee on these issues in order to present a balanced draft report and resolution to the Expanded Bureau to meet in Copenhagen in April.



General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights, and Humanitarian Questions (Third Committee), Ms. Nebahat Albayrak (Netherlands), the Committee's Rapporteur, opened the meeting by welcoming delegates and introducing the three OSCE officials who were invited to present reports and take questions from Committee Members.

Address by Rolf Ekeus High Commissioner for National Minorities



Mr. Rolf Ekeus began his remarks by highlighting the overarching task of his Office, which includes the prevention of conflict by focusing upon interethnic tension and majority/minority issues. Moving on to issues regarding specific regions, Mr. Ekeus noted that he has stepped up activities in Central Asia, and in Georgia, as well as in Central and South Eastern Europe. Mr. Ekeus went on to detail his specific actions and opinions as to developments, positive and negative, in individual OSCE participating States. On thematic issues, Mr. Ekeus noted his concern with regard to the matter of minorities and broadcast media. Mr. Ekeus finally commented on the issue of "new minorities," noting that he has addressed this issue in his work at the request of individual governments as well as in response to the Rotterdam Declaration of the OSCE PA.

Discussion

During the course of the discussion which followed, Mr. Ekeus was asked to expound upon his intentions with regard to Kosovo, to which he responded that he was hesitating to get involved at the moment given the already large international presence there. In response to another question related to the region of Southeastern Europe, Mr. Ekeus commented on the problems related to refugee returns in Croatia as well as the delay in passing a new law on national minorities. Mr.

Ekeus also discussed ways to incorporate the gender aspects of ethnic conflict into his work. Several delegates asked for his comments on the situation with regard to the Kurdish minority in Turkey and about the High Commissioner's work in Georgia and Moldova. On these more country-specific questions, Mr. Ekeus mentioned his visits to the countries in question as well as the projects in which his Office is engaged.

Address by Christian Strohal Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Ambassador Strohal highlighted some of the projects and activities in which his Office is involved. He gave attention to the legislative support unit which has proved to be a useful tool for legislators, government officials and other experts in comparing and developing legislation. Mr. Strohal also spoke of the ODIHR's efforts in preventive action through the recently established unit dealing with combating terrorism.

Mr. Strohal also mentioned an area of particular interest to parliamentarians – electoral processes. He pointed out that there are a number of countries where the ODIHR is working with government authorities to improve the electoral framework and follow-up on recommendations made after election observation missions. The election observation missions themselves have been an area of particular cooperation with the OSCE PA. He noted other areas for potential cooperation, including the participation of parliamentarians in the upcoming seminars and meetings of the ODIHR. Finally, he commented on the ODIHR's work in the fields of Roma/Sinti and gender issues.



Discussion

A number of delegates raised questions to Mr. Strohal during the subsequent discussion period. In highlighting the important issue of combating human trafficking, one delegate drew attention to an upcoming conference on this issue to be spon-

sored by the Finnish government.

In response to a question about the follow-up to election observations, Mr. Strohal responded that the most important ingredient in addressing and undertaking the ODIHR's recommendations was the political will of the governments in question.

Mr. Strohal also commented on the work of the ODIHR's gender unit in response to a question concerning the deteriorating situation with regard to gender equality within the OSCE, including the ODIHR.

Finally, Mr. Strohal commented on the actions of ODIHR in response to developments in Georgia and Ukraine after receiving a specific question regarding those countries.

Address by Jutta Wolke Acting Representative on Freedom of the Media



Jutta Wolke opened her remarks by highlighting the fact that the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media has been without a Representative for two months. Ms. Wolke noted that she has been asked in the meantime to head the

office, although in an administrative capacity, rather than in a political one. As a result, the mandate cannot be fully fulfilled. Ms. Wolke also commented on some of the activities that the Office is continuing to pursue in the interim period before the appointment of the new Representative.

Discussion

In the question/answer session which followed, a delegate raised the issue of the spread of anti-

semitic sentiment and material through the internet, to which Ms. Wolke responded that her Office follows such developments closely. Another delegate, referring to the speech of the recipient of the Prize for Journalism and Democracy, expressed the view that it is necessary to name countries and cases of specific concern rather than just general principles.

Finally, an Assembly member asked for a clarification on where the appointment procedure stands at the moment, to which Ms. Wolke responded that this was a question for the Chairmanship since her Office was not involved in the negotiations.

Address by Nebahat Albayrak Rapporteur of the Third Committee



Nebahat Albayrak introduced the discussion on the Third Committee's Edinburgh resolution by noting that in her proposals to this year's Annual Session she intends, in particular, to concentrate on suggestions as to what kind of partner-

ship and what kind of cooperation is needed for the implementation of the Assembly's policies and recommendations.

She pointed out that she would also give attention to a number of concrete issues, such as trafficking and new minorities. These were subjects which were central in last year's report and deserve to be reiterated. When discussing new minorities, she said that she would like in particular to emphasize the Assembly's proposals concerning the role and resources of the HCNM.

Finally, she stated that the important part of her report to the Annual Session would be the draft resolution, to be accompanied by a short introductory document.



Ad Hoc Committees



OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committees took the opportunity to hold meetings in Vienna. The Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability discussed how to ensure that the OSCE PA Declarations be more focused and coherent and concluded that a limited number of recommendations should be forwarded to the governmental side each year. The Committee, chaired by Congressman Steny Hoyer, heard a report from Ambassador Nothelle, Permanent OSCE PA Representative in Vienna, and Members emphasized the need to ensure free access for the Ambassador to all OSCE meetings. During his presentation at the Closing Session of the Winter Meeting, OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubis advocated more transparency in OSCE decision-making and expressed his opinion that Ambassador Nothelle should have access to all OSCE meetings, including the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance.

Chaired by Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen, the OSCE PA Parliamentary Team on Moldova discussed the present situation on the negotiations concerning the status of the Transdniestrian region. Team

Member Anne-Marie Lizin (Belgium) informed the Team that the Belgian Parliament would be ready to host a Parliamentary Conference later in 2004 to support the negotiations on a federal constitution for Moldova.

Several Members of the OSCE PA Working Group on Belarus met to discuss the Group's future activities in Belarus. Members also met with the Belarusian Delegation to the OSCE PA as well as with Jan Marinus Wiersma, the Chairman of the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Belarus.

Also during the PA Winter Meeting in Vienna, President Bruce George met with the parliamentary delegations of Albania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Jordan and Morocco. He discussed with Jan Marinus Wiersma, Vice-President of the European Parliament, parliamentary troika activities in Belarus and Moldova. The President also chaired an informal meeting with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, also attended by Slovenian Ambassador Jan Lenarcic, current Chair of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners.





Closing Session of the Three General Committees



Address by Jan Kubis OSCE Secretary General

In his address, Secretary General Kubis gave an extensive overview of the ongoing reforms of management systems of financial, material, human and information resources. Regarding the Unified Budget process, the Secretary General highly valued the comments of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the 2004 Budget Proposal. They will be taken into account during the forthcoming discussion on the budget format. Mr. Kubis also gladly noted that numerous PA recommendations were indeed taken into account by the participating States agreeing on the budget. The total financial resources requested in the 2004 Unified Budget Proposal were just under 185 million Euro, which was 0.4% lower compared to the approved budget for 2003. Following intensive discussions in the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance, the 2004 Unified Budget was approved at the level of just under 180 million Euro, which includes funds for implementing additional commitments agreed at the Ministerial Council.

The Secretary General emphasized that the OSCE remains a field-oriented organization, with the share of funds related to operational activities representing around 78% of the OSCE's budget for 2004. This year's budget continues the trend of careful and measured reductions in the resources devoted to missions in South-Eastern Europe, the only exception being the OSCE programmes in Serbia and Montenegro. At the same time, the Secretary Gen-

eral continued, the budget for the OSCE centres in Central Asia has increased by over 20% from 8 million Euros in 2003 to just over 10 million Euros in 2004. Despite the increase, OSCE activities in Central Asia make up less than 6% of the budget for operational activities in 2004. Mr. Kubis explained that one of the main obstacles for significantly increasing the amount of resources devoted to this region is the ability to absorb funds.

Other subjects addressed by Mr. Kubis included security of OSCE staff, staff regulations, the recent survey of OSCE seconded mission members, high staff rotation rate and the Strategic Police Matters Unit. Regarding the issue of gender mainstreaming, Mr. Kubis noted that the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking has started to work on a complete revision of the Action Plan for Gender Issues. He underlined that there is still a gender imbalance in the OSCE which is inconsistent with an organization promoting democratic values and equality. The Secretary General welcomed the contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular the Special Rapporteur for Gender Issues Tone Tingsgård (MP, Sweden) to this revision process, and to gender mainstreaming efforts in the OSCE in general.

Address by Tone Tingsgaard the OSCE PA Special Representative on the Gender Issue

At the Joint Session, Vice-President Tone Tingsgaard, Special Representative on Gender Issues, reported on developments made on the gender issue since the 2003 Annual Session in Rotterdam. In her Report, Mrs. Tingsgaard expressed her dissatisfaction with the gender imbalance in the OSCE: "Recent statistics demonstrate that the gender situation in the OSCE is still far from equal - it is particularly unsatisfactory that the situation has deteriorated throughout 2003." Mrs. Tingsgaard stressed that unequal gender representation at the highest levels of the Organization was a particular problem. She also criticized the recruitment system in the Organization for not giving equal opportunity to men and women. Mrs. Tingsgaard also emphasized that the OSCE PA still needed to make some



progress, although improvements have been made in the last year with regard to women in leadership positions and women's attendance.

Mrs. Tingsgaard emphasized the need for urgent action in order to correct the gender imbalance in the OSCE. "We have the statistics, we have the declarations, we have the plans. Now, it is time to implement them. If we want to find solutions to the problems and threats that we face, such as fighting terrorism, trafficking and economic crimes, and if we want to be effective in conflict prevention, we must see to it that women are involved and responsible on all levels."

Mrs. Tingsgaard also presented her plan for developing a strategy paper on equal opportunities within the OSCE, which she will present during the Annual Session of the Assembly in Edinburgh. Before concluding, she encouraged the Rapporteurs of the three General Committees to include the gender issue in their respective draft Resolutions.

Discussion

In the ensuing debate, Members stressed the need to ratify and implement international conventions in all of the OSCE participating States. Some Delegates raised the issue of quotas and emphasized the effectiveness of the new rule of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) where Delegations with no female Members are denied the right to vote. Other Members expressed their dissatisfaction with quotas and argued that a rule like that of the PACE can be counter-productive. In addition, Members discussed how best to contribute to the 2006 UN Conference on women and political participation.

Brief Report by Göran Lennmarker Chair of the First Committee

Mr. Lennmarker informed the Joint Committee about presentations and discussion in the First General Committee which focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the OSCE. He said he appreciated the fact that for the first time the Committee had been briefed by Representatives working in the field. Ambassador William Hill, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, reported on daily aspects on the ground and presented an optimistic picture concerning the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova. The Committee was also briefed by the Senior Police Adviser, Richard Monk.

The Rapporteur of the Committee, Mr. Clifford Lincoln, introduced his ideas for an Edinburgh Resolution focusing on terrorism, unresolved conflicts, weapons proliferation and failures in the democratic control of armed forces, as well as structural weaknesses of the OSCE, in particular, the consensus rule for decision-making. Mr. Lennmarker said that points from the ensuing discussion had expressed the need for well-managed borders but also maintained the strong belief that they should not be a hindrance to closer co-operation.



Brief Report by Mr. Benjamin Cardin Chair of the Second Committee

The Chairman of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment, Mr. Benjamin Cardin, informed members about the presentations and debates held in the Committee including the debate held on the economic situation in Georgia led by Vice-President Burjanadze and Ambassador Reeve.

The Chairman also welcomed the adoption of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht. This document, as indicated by the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, offers a helpful framework for the Organization's efforts towards economic development. It also co-ordinates very well with the Assembly's theme for the Annual Session in Edinburgh.

In assessing what strategies the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly may want to undertake, Mr. Cardin referred to co-operation in order to enhance development, security and stability, as well as the strengthening of good governance to ensure sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

Brief Report by Nebahat Albayrak Rapporteur of the Third Committee

Nebahat Albayrak, Rapporteur of the Third Committee, informed the Joint Session that the Third Committee had heard presentations by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Director



of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Acting Representative on Freedom of the Media. She highlighted some of the main points made by each of the speakers, drawing particular attention to the urgency with which a new Representative on Freedom of the Media should be appointed. Ms. Albayrak also summarized the discussion on her proposed resolution to be presented in Edinburgh, emphasizing co-operation and partnership in following up on the goals from last year's Declaration.

Closing Statement by Bruce George President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

President George closed the 2004 Winter Meeting by thanking all of those involved in its success, including the Austrian Parliament, the Austrian Government, the OSC E Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General of the OSCE and all representatives of OSCE Institutions.

The Winter Meeting has again proved to be an excellent opportunity for the exchange of dialogue and interaction on OSCE topics and issues in preparation for the Edinburgh Annual Session in July. The President in particular acknowledged the remarks of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office about the need to reform the OSCE consensus rule. President George expressed hope that the consensus rule be reformed, thus allowing greater flexibility in decision-making on issues that are not of strategic importance to any country.

**PROGRAMME OF THE THIRD WINTER MEETING
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**
Vienna, 19-20 February 2004

All meetings of the Standing Committee and the three General Committees will take place in the Congress Center Hofburg in Vienna.

Thursday, 19 February

08.30-11.30 **Standing Committee**

11.30-13.30 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:**

- Call to order;
- Opening remarks by the President of the OSCE PA;
- Address by the President of the Austrian Nationalrat;
- Address of the OSCE Chair-in-Office followed by a question/answer session;
- Presentation of Prize for Journalism and Democracy

13.30-15.00 **Lunch break**

15.00-18.00 **General Committee on Political Affairs and Security**

- Opening remarks by the Committee Chair;
- Briefing by Senior OSCE Officials followed by a question/answer session;
- Discussion led by the Rapporteur on the subjects to be considered at the Annual Session in Edinburgh followed by general debate
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15.00-18.00 **General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment**

- Opening remarks by the Committee Chair;
- Briefing by Senior OSCE Officials followed by a question/answer session;
- Discussion led by the Rapporteur on the subjects to be considered at the Annual Session in Edinburgh followed by general debate

18.30 Buffet Reception hosted by the President of the Austrian Nationalrat

Friday, 20 February

09.30-12.30 **General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions**

Opening remarks by the Committee Chair;
Briefing by Senior OSCE Officials followed by a question/answer session;
Discussion led by the Rapporteur on the subjects to be considered at the Annual Session in Edinburgh followed by general debate

12.30-14.30 **Lunch break**

14.30-17.00 **Closing Joint Session of the three General Committees**

- Call to order;
- Address by the OSCE Secretary General followed by a question/answer session;
- Report by the OSCE PA Special representative on the gender issue followed by a debate;
- Reports by the Chairs of the three General Committees;
- Concluding statement by the OSCE PA President