

REPORT

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ninth Winter Meeting

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OSCE PA

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Prepared by the International Secretariat of the OSCE PA

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Summary



Since February 2002, the OSCE PA has held an annual Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna. The Winter Meeting provides an opportunity for the three General Committees to hold discussions and be briefed by high-level OSCE officials. The Meeting also serves as an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear presentations by the three Committee Rapporteurs and to discuss their draft reports for the upcoming Annual Session. The Winter Meeting is the second largest event on the OSCE PA calendar.

The main highlight of the ninth Winter Meeting was a special debate on the situation in Afghanistan on 19 February. The debate was introduced by OSCE PA Vice-President and Head of the Kazakh Delegation Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and Michel Voisin who serves as the Assembly's Special Representative on Afghanistan and as Head of France's Delegation to the OSCE PA.

Mr. Tokayev noted that the Kazakh Chairmanship has made stabilizing Afghanistan one of its top priorities, while Mr. Voisin lamented that "coalition forces have not been able to provide adequate security." The Special Representative called for greater focus in fighting corruption and tackling poverty, both of which are necessary to combat drug trafficking and providing long-term security.

The Winter Meeting included meetings of the three General Committees and a meeting of the Standing Committee. OSCE PA President Joao Soares reported to the Standing Committee on the recent election observation mission to Ukraine and Treasurer Roberto Battelli reported on the excellent financial health of the Secretariat.

Mr. Battelli said that for the 17th year in a row the Assembly has remained within budget. Last year, he reported, the Assembly was four per cent under budget and received a clean bill of health from external auditors. Secretary General Spencer Oliver also addressed the Standing Committee, discussing, in particular, the PA's election observation activities.

In his speech at the opening session of the

Winter Meeting, President Soares underlined the importance of the Parliamentary Assembly within the OSCE, particularly because the PA works in a democratic manner. Parliamentarians, he said, not only function under democratic rules, they also speak out on controversial issues and make recommendations by majority vote.

In addition to Mr. Soares, the opening day speakers included President of the Austrian Nationalrat Barbara Prammer and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev. OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut spoke during the closing session on 19 February, and answered questions from the assembled parliamentarians on a wide variety of topics.

Other speakers included the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek, ODIHR Director Janez Lenarcic, CPC Director Herbert Salber, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Goran Svilanovic and the OSCE's new Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro.

Tone Tingsgaard, the Assembly's Special Representative on Gender Issues, presented her report on gender balance in the OSCE during the closing session.

Parliamentarians from 52 participating States, along with parliamentarians from three Mediterranean Partners, most members of the OSCE Permanent Council, and several heads of Field Missions attended the Winter Meeting.

Standing Committee Meeting



The Standing Committee consists of the OSCE PA's 55 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, the Fall Meetings and the Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget, and appoints the Secretary General. The 2010 Winter Meeting's Standing Committee met on 18 February and was addressed by the PA's President, Treasurer, and Secretary General as well as by Special Representatives and members of Ad Hoc Committees.

Report by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Joao Soares

OSCE PA President Joao Soares (Portugal) opened the Standing Committee meeting on 18 February and informed Members about his activities since the Committee last met, including a presidential visit he made to Kazakhstan.

Mr. Soares reminded the Members of his priorities, which include promoting transparency and accountability in the OSCE. He reported on the recent election observation mission to Ukraine and discussed the missed possibility of including the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly in the final drafting of the post-election statement. He also mentioned some of the problems encountered regarding co-operation with ODIHR.

The President offered special thanks to Kazakhstan, which holds the OSCE Chairmanship this year, for hosting the upcoming Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum. He went on to call upon the Permanent Council to adjust the consensus rule, stating that the PC must be able to take important political decisions, which unfortunately has rarely been the case.

Report by the Treasurer of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Roberto Battelli

Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), Treasurer of the Parliamentary Assembly, thanked the Parliament of Portugal for the generous support it has provided to President Soares and reported that for the 17th year in a row, the PA contin-

ues to remain within budget and is in good financial health. He commended the efficiency of the International Secretariat and outlined the work ahead: after the Bureau's approval, a draft budget proposal for 2010-2011 will be circulated not later than 6 June.

Mr. Battelli said that last year the OSCE PA stayed four per cent below the assigned budget, and that 94 per cent of the countries' contributions had been received. Moreover, he stated that the countries' prompt payments ensure that the Assembly's activities continue undisturbed. He also commended Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretaries General Gustavo Pallares and Tina Schoen, and Administrative Director Kurt Lerras on the efficient way they have managed the finances of the OSCE PA.

Report by the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, R. Spencer Oliver

Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported on the PA's extensive programme in the field of election observation highlighting in particular the missions to Ukraine and Tajikistan. He informed the Standing Committee of upcoming events, making special note of the Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen, the Annual Session in Oslo and the Fall Meetings in Palermo.

Mr. Oliver gave an overview of the work of the International Secretariat, highlighting the importance of the weekly *News from Copenhagen* newsletter as a communication tool and

Standing Committee Meeting



Standing Committee Meeting



the PA's Research Fellowship Programme, which brings indispensable research and language capabilities to the Secretariat.

Stressing the PA's efficiency, Mr. Oliver reiterated that the OSCE PA has stayed within the approved budget for 17 years in a row, mentioning that for Assembly meetings, host countries cover much of the expense. He also pointed out that 150 parliamentarians were sent to observe the presidential election in Ukraine with all costs covered by their own governments.

He also mentioned that the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, had appointed OSCE PA Vice-President Pia Christmas-Moeller as Special Co-ordinator of the short-term observers for the upcoming parliamentary elections in Tajikistan.

The Secretary General also announced that for this Winter Meeting, the Secretariat was beginning a new practice of distributing documents electronically in order to save paper. He thanked the Dutch Delegation to the OSCE PA for encouraging this new environmentally friendly procedure during the Fall Meetings in Athens.

Reports on Election Observation Missions, the Ad Hoc Committees and the Activities of the Special Representatives

President Soares reported on the election observation mission to Ukraine, which he led, explaining that the PA's mission was in Ukraine long before the first round.

He noted that the main complaints about the election process pertained to home voting and

the voters list, but emphasized that both the first and second rounds of voting met most international standards. Second Committee Rapporteur Serhiy Shevchuk (Ukraine) thanked the PA Members who participated in the observation mission and expressed his satisfaction with the way the election was carried out.

Vice-President Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria) reported on the observation mission to the parliamentary elections in Albania, stating that it was an objective observation and that the elections were carried out properly. The outcome of the elections should therefore be respected, he said, which is a sign of democratic maturity.

The Speaker of the Albanian Parliament, Josefina Topalli, regretted that a political impasse in her country was preventing the functioning of parliament. This is despite the fact, she said, that the 510 observers who monitored the election were generally impressed by improvements since previous elections. Ms. Topalli called upon Standing Committee members to raise their voices on this issue. Answering this call, President Soares reiterated his position that all elected parliamentarians in Albania should assume their positions in the Parliament.

Cecilia Wigstrom (Sweden), member of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, reported on the group's activities since the last Standing Committee meeting, stating that she was pleased with the continued co-operation with Belarus in 2010. She reported that the electoral process conditions, together with freedom of speech and assembly, remain a subject of dispute in the country.

Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden), Chair of the Parliamentary Team on Moldova,

Standing Committee Meeting



said that she regretted that the April 2009 parliamentary elections in Moldova were followed by a political conflict. She announced that the team intends to visit Moldova in March/April this year, and that she will report on these activities to the next Standing Committee meeting. The Moldovan Delegation expressed gratitude for this ongoing co-operation with the OSCE PA, emphasizing the importance of dialogue.

Alcee Hastings (USA), the PA's Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, reported on his activities in further developing the Mediterranean dimension of the Parliamentary Assembly. He informed the Assembly of his efforts to maintain contacts with Mediterranean partners and reported on recent visits to various countries in the region.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, OSCE PA Vice-President and Head of the Kazakh Delegation, noted the unique, prestigious and influential role of the OSCE. Mr. Tokayev said that Kazakhstan recognizes the significant foreign policy achievement of holding the OSCE Chairmanship this year but is also aware of its great responsibility.

Combating human trafficking, terrorism and the smuggling of small arms and light weapons are among the highest priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship, he said. Particular importance will be placed on advancing the Corfu Process and pressing for a common political declaration at the next Ministerial Council.

Finally, Mr. Tokayev invited delegates to the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum to be held 14-16 May 2010 in Almaty where, in addition to OSCE participating States, China, Pakistan and India have been invited to participate.



First Joint Session of the General Committees

Joao Soares, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Winter Meeting's first joint session of the general committees began with an address by OSCE PA President Joao Soares, who expressed his confidence in the Kazakh Chairmanship, recalling that the OSCE PA was one of the first bodies to endorse Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE Chairmanship. He then elaborated on the important role of parliamentarians in "teaching democracy," and the OSCE tradition of demonstrating respect for other countries.

President Soares cited the role of parliamentarians and the OSCE in the demilitarization and denuclearization of the former Soviet countries, and noted the many positive effects these developments have had on regional and global security. Mr. Soares also spoke about the important role of the PA in election observation, and the expertise that parliamentarians bring to this process given their intimate understanding of the political elements of elections.

The President lamented the internal disputes that the OSCE has suffered in the field of election observation, stating that the OSCE must now look to "leave behind the bureaucratic ravine into which it has fallen."

Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Nationalrat

Following President Soares's speech was an address by Barbara Prammer, Head of the Austrian Delegation to the OSCE PA and President of the Austrian Nationalrat. Ms. Prammer welcomed the delegates to Vienna, noting the opportunity the annual Winter Meeting provides for interaction between parliamentarians and the governmental side of the OSCE.

She further expressed how impressed she was by the Kazakh leadership thus far and congratulated them on the early adoption of the 2010 OSCE budget.

Ms. Prammer outlined her hopes for the continuation of the Corfu Process, and her belief in taking a comprehensive approach to security that includes human rights, economic and environmental concerns as well as politico-military matters. She also spoke of the OSCE's efforts in



Joao Soares



Kanat Saudabayev



Barbara Prammer

First Joint Session of the General Committees



combating anti-Semitism in the wake of the 27 January International Day of Holocaust Remembrance and called for more action in the promotion of tolerance and equal rights for Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area.

Kanat Saudabayev, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

Kazakh Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev emphasized the Chairmanship's commitment to making use of the OSCE PA's full potential in the coming year. He mentioned the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum to be held from 14 to 16 May in Almaty, and the potential benefits for Central Asia that will hopefully follow. Stressing the role of the PA in election monitoring, he pointed to the recent success of the Ukrainian election observation mission.

Mr. Saudabayev went on to reiterate the "Four T's" that govern the Kazakh Chairmanship's 2010 agenda: "trust, tradition, transparency and tolerance." He stated that resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as expanding upon the Corfu Process are central goals of the Chairmanship, and advocated expanding the role of the Forum for Security Co-operation in these endeavours. Mr. Saudabayev also touched on the importance of the OSCE in Afghanistan, calling for greater OSCE efforts in the area of Afghan border security.

The Foreign Minister underlined the serious-



ness of tackling the problem of climate change and cited the effects of environmental degradation particularly regarding the erosion of the Aral Sea and the economic and social impacts this has on the surrounding region.

He also said that the OSCE must show leadership in its efforts to inspire new economic growth in its region and reverse the current economic downturn. In closing, he spoke of finding new ways to increase the role of the OSCE Asian Partners, and stressed the need for a balance in the OSCE's approach to the three dimensions in the coming year.

The ensuing discussion began with a question about the role of women within the OSCE, citing a lack of women in positions of power in the Organization. Other questions dealt with Kazakhstan's domestic commitment to human rights and freedom of the media, and the current state of the Chairmanship's efforts to host a 2010 OSCE Summit. Another issue raised was regarding whether the Kazakh Chairmanship would seek to divert additional funds to the sometimes underfunded OSCE Field Missions.

In response, Mr. Saudabayev stated that he hopes to add more qualified female staffers to high-level positions during the coming year, and that Kazakhstan was committed to fully investigating the human rights cases that were called into question. He also reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to holding a 2010 OSCE Summit, and reiterated his intentions of increasing funding for the Field Missions.





First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



**Consiglio Di Nino,
Chair of the First Committee**

Consiglio Di Nino (Canada), Chair of the First Committee, introduced the Committee's agenda, which included presentations by OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek, Director of Conflict Prevention Center Herbert Salber, Committee Rapporteur Riccardo Migliori and Committee Vice-Chair Canan Kalsin on follow-up to the Vilnius Declaration.

**Canan Kalsin,
Vice-Chair of the First Committee**

Vice-Chair Canan Kalsin (Turkey) presented her interim follow-up report on initiatives taken on recommendations adopted at the 18th Annual Session in Vilnius. Ms. Kalsin reminded delegates that the Committee had approved resolutions concerning food security, strengthening the OSCE, small arms and light weapons (SALW), arms control and disarmament, labour migration in Central Asia, and Afghanistan.

Ms. Kalsin expressed regret that little progress had been made in reforming the OSCE. She cited the fact that the Permanent Council's meetings remain closed to the public and noted that no improvements had been made to the decision-making process within the OSCE.

The Vice-Chair mentioned that although the Vilnius Declaration called on Afghanistan to ensure free and fair elections the August 2009 Presidential and Provincial Council elections in Afghanistan were marked by fraud. She noted that according to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister



Kanat Saudabayev, the stability of Afghanistan remains a priority for the OSCE as the country is a known source of international terrorism as well as a supplier of illicit drugs.

Ms. Kalsin highlighted the work of the OSCE in ensuring compliance with OSCE standards on SALW and ammunition. Regarding arms control, she noted that the Ministerial Council had adopted a decision on the Corfu Process which tasked the Chairmanship with the responsibility of continuing the dialogue on multidimensional threats to transnational security.

Ms. Kalsin concluded by stating that she looked forward to receiving input from participating States on progress made on these recommendations at the national level since the previous Annual Session in Vilnius.

**Riccardo Migliori,
Rapporteur of the First Committee**

Rapporteur Riccardo Migliori (Italy) gave a presentation on the subjects he intends to include in his report and resolution that will be considered at the Annual Session in Oslo. He underlined the threats that crime and corruption pose to the rule of law, emphasizing that transnational crime is a global challenge and thus requires a global response.

The Rapporteur stressed his intention to prepare the resolution in terms as concrete as possible in order for it to be translated into national legislation across the OSCE area. While noting that OSCE participating States have different legal norms, his hope is that the resolution can help harmonize the countries' laws as much as possible in order to fight corruption and organized transnational crime.

First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Ambassador Vollebaek argued that a mismanagement of ethnic and religious diversity has shaped much of Europe's history. The Ambassador cautioned that extreme nationalism, fueled by the current economic crisis, is once again on the rise in the OSCE area and that it is up to responsible politicians to successfully navigate the transitions that many societies are currently facing.

The High Commissioner further pointed out that he has no intention to extend the framework of his mandate to so-called "new minorities" but rather to focus on how to manage integration; with education, language, and infrastructure mentioned as potential elements.

Mr. Vollebaek stated that unilateral measures designed to address the situation concerning ethnic minorities are a "recipe for trouble," and reminded delegates of the basic tenet of international law that protection of minority rights is the responsibility of the State in which the minority resides.

Ambassador Vollebaek closed by remarking that linguistic and cultural diversity of our global societies is an immense asset to humanity and that integration of minorities while respecting diversity is the answer to this challenge. He also invited parliamentarians to a special event on integration that he intends at the 2010 Annual Session in Oslo.

Herbert Salber, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center (CPC)

Ambassador Salber gave an overview of the CPC's diverse activities: giving advice to Field

Missions, providing input on the Corfu Process, promoting border security and co-operation with Afghanistan, and offering feedback to the Forum for Security Co-operation.

Regarding the work of the OSCE Field Missions, he emphasized that the CPC has a co-operative approach with all delegations, the Chairmanship, the host governments and also the missions. The Field Missions report daily to the CPC and have a unique role of advice and assistance.

Ambassador Salber explained that various mechanisms for early warning, conflict prevention and peaceful settlements of disputes from the 1990s are still relevant. Part of the Corfu Process, the CPC Director said, is to review these mechanisms; hence a new tool could be the deployment by the Chairmanship or the Secretary General of short-term assessment or mediation missions in the early phases of a conflict. He emphasized that there is a need to combine early warning tools with early action.

Finally, Mr. Salber spoke of the improvement in the security dialogue within the FSC paying particular attention to the topics of strengthening arms control, as well as confidence and security building measures. Responding to a question about the closed field operation in Georgia, Ambassador Salber explained that although the OSCE no longer has a presence there, it is involved in conflict resolution through the Geneva discussions as well as incident prevention and response mechanisms.

Discussion

The discussion period following the presentations in the First Committee covered a wide range of issues. Parliamentarians discussed the topic of ethnic minorities and the need for clear definitions in this area. The use of minority languages in elections was also touched upon. The security situation in Georgia following the 2008 war was also brought up.

The condition of internally displaced persons (IDPs) was also referred to during the discussion, with emphasis placed on the need to solve protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. Concerns regarding the security situation in Afghanistan were also raised by the assembled parliamentarians.

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



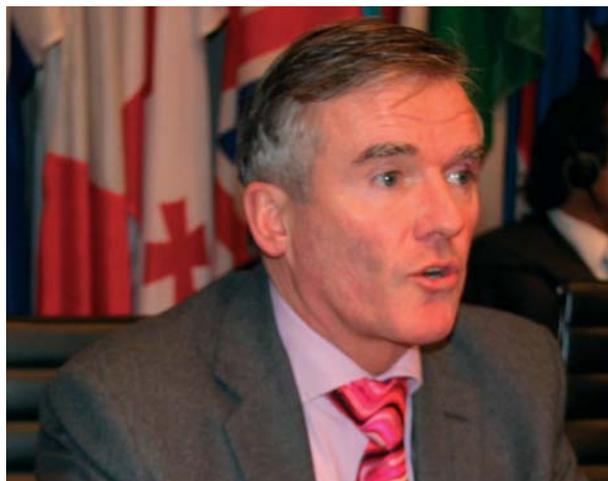
Roland Blum,
Chair of the Second Committee

Roland Blum (France) focused in his opening remarks on climate change. Referring to the exemplary energy-climate policy of the European Union, he expressed disappointment in the outcome of the Copenhagen climate conference held during December 2009. He stressed that in attempts to reduce carbon emissions, developed countries should be ready to help less developed countries, but that developing countries should not rely entirely on developed countries. Mr. Blum reiterated the French proposal to establish a World Environment Organization which would co-ordinate the post-Copenhagen actions regarding climate change.

Ivor Callely,
Vice-Chair of the Second Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Second Committee, Ivor Callely (Ireland), provided a brief overview of the interim follow-up report on the Vilnius Declaration, which included actions taken on energy security and co-operation, climate change and water management. The activities in the energy area primarily consisted of the work of the OSCE Office of the Economic and Environmental Affairs as well as OSCE Offices in Minsk, Tajikistan and Baku.

At the request of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the OSCE contributed to a comprehensive analysis about possible security implications of climate change by organizing the October 2009 Chairmanship Conference on Security Implications of Climate Change, held



in Bucharest. Substantial discussion on the climate change issue was also a highlight of the 2009 OSCE PA Fall Meetings.

Activities in the field of water management were represented by the water resource management and the Aral Sea Basin initiatives of the OSCE Centre in Astana as well as the Dniester III project and the Black Sea Monitoring System, implemented by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Following the discussion, Mr. Callely commented positively on statements made by parliamentarians.

Serhiy Shevchuk,
Rapporteur of the Second Committee

Rapporteur Serhiy Shevchuk (Ukraine), provided an overview of the topics to be covered in his draft report that will be presented at the Assembly's Annual Session in Oslo. Mr. Shevchuk mentioned that he intends to begin with an overview and analysis of the work performed by other international organizations regarding crime and corruption. One of the problems, according to Mr. Shevchuk, is the increasingly international nature of organized crime and corruption, which is often in contrast to law enforcement bodies that are typically constrained by national borders.

In his draft report, Mr. Shevchuk said, he plans to refer to issues such as state capture, public procurement on regional and central levels, tax evasion, and corruption in the extractive industries and energy sectors. Mr. Shevchuk also highlighted the relevance of the problem of organized crime and corruption for developed countries.

Following the discussion, Mr. Shevchuk

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



thanked the parliamentarians for their comments and stated his agreement with suggestions to split the political and economic aspects of corruption as well as to disclose transnational criminal alliances.

**Goran Svilanovic,
OSCE Co-ordinator of Economic and
Environmental Activities (OCEEA)**

Mr. Svilanovic briefed the Second Committee on the OCEEA's plans for 2010. The main priority for the OCEEA, he said, remains providing advice and support to the Kazakh Chairmanship in preparation for the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum. Other activities planned by the OCEEA relate to good governance, energy security, water management, and supporting multilateral environmental agreements. Mr. Svilanovic also assured the Assembly that the OCEEA would continue to pay particular attention to fighting corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.

Mr. Svilanovic's address also dealt with migration and development. He noted that migration remains a controversial policy issue, often driven by emotions and pre-conceived ideas. He emphasized that effective and comprehensive labour migration policies can help stimulate economic growth and employment. Mr. Svilanovic further emphasized that implementing gender-sensitive labour migration policies would greatly contribute to the full utilization of both male and female labour migrants' potential.

The Co-ordinator concluded by calling for reflection and consideration of the current labour migration policies in all OSCE States.

**Fatmir Besimi, Minister of Economy of the
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

Fatmir Besimi presented the Energy Community Treaty to the Assembly. The Treaty is intended to create a regional energy market in South East Europe with an aim to further include it in the single energy market of the European Union. An additional goal is to encourage investment in the region, promote security of supply and improve the environmental situation in relation to energy production and supply.

**Slavtcho Neykov,
Director of the Energy Community for
South East Europe Secretariat**

Slavtcho Neykov continued the presentation of the Energy Community Initiative by providing an overview of the topics that the Initiative addresses, including electricity, gas, competition, renewable energy, energy efficiency and security of supply. As of today, the Energy Community Initiative unites 38 countries and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Mr. Neykov concluded by stating that the topic of energy demands regional co-operation.

Discussion

During the debate Members emphasized the importance of energy security in the work of the Assembly and called for joint action regarding energy and the environment. The need to work on issues of importance for domestic constituents was also highlighted.

Parliamentarians also discussed the problem of cargo piracy, which results annually in over 100 vessels being attacked by pirates. Parliamentarians have called on the participating States to combat piracy, which is especially active off the coast of Somalia, by tracking illicit funding and strengthening legislative responses to this problem.

Discussing the issues of transnational crime and corruption, parliamentarians called for consistency and unity in legal action among countries. They also drew attention to the importance of incentives in finding solutions to corruption problems.

Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



**Walburga Habsburg Douglas,
Chair of the Third Committee**

The Chair of the Third General Committee, Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden), opened the meeting on 19 February by pointing out that human dimension issues are closely linked to politico-military as well as economic and environmental matters. Questions regarding human rights and humanitarian issues should be kept at the forefront even when political or economic matters are discussed, she emphasized.

The work of the OSCE, Ms. Habsburg Douglas said, is deeply connected to matters pertaining to human rights, which is why the OSCE has such great responsibility in this arena. Parliamentarians are the Organization's link to civil society and have a real chance to discuss and influence the situation when it comes to human rights and humanitarian questions. Finally, Ms. Habsburg Douglas outlined the committee's priorities for the current meeting: discussing follow-up on past work, preparing for future projects and considering speeches made by OSCE officials followed by a discussion period.

**Robert Aderholt,
Vice-Chair of the Third Committee**

Robert Aderholt (USA), Vice-Chair of the Third General Committee, reported on follow-up actions of OSCE Institutions and Field Missions regarding work done on recommendations contained in the Vilnius Declaration.



Mr. Aderholt praised the work the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, in particular, and highlighted many other areas of work that the OSCE has performed largely in line with the PA's recommendations.

Mr. Aderholt updated Members on co-operation between the OSCE PA and ODIHR on election observation, which was a topic addressed in Vilnius. ODIHR expects to produce new publications concerning observation of electronic voting as well as voter registration, he reported.

Mr. Aderholt also addressed the issue of the death penalty. Recommendations for a moratorium and eventual abolition of the death penalty were taken into consideration and the OSCE also conducted some activities that were focused on raising awareness of this issue. Regarding tolerance and anti-Semitism measures, the Vice-Chair referred to the OSCE Ministerial Council decision designed to improve statistics and its collection methods in order to procure reliable data on hate crimes and make such data publicly available.

**Matteo Mecacci,
Rapporteur of the Third Committee**

Matteo Mecacci (Italy) presented his ideas for the Third Committee's report to be presented at the Annual Session in Oslo, the main subject of which is tackling transnational crime and corruption. The Rapporteur mentioned that research has revealed that when levels of crime and corruption are high, human rights suffer.

Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Maria Grazia Giammarinaro and Janez Lenarcic

Moreover, in the OSCE area some states often use the fight against criminality as an excuse to oppress and reduce civil freedoms and human rights.

Despite the fact that programmes to curb crime and corruption exist, the question of how to move from policy to action remains. He suggested that after meeting in both Oslo and Palermo the parliamentarians of the OSCE outline mechanisms designed to tackle crime and corruption. Additional independent studies are needed to create institutions capable of dealing with these problems. The Rapporteur also recommended that the PA work more closely with other authorities and institutions, and perhaps establish specialized bodies to deal with these problems.

Mr. Mecacci noted that a new Special Representative on Freedom of the Media, who is due to be named this year, should be appointed as soon as possible because the OSCE area still deals with many problems in that field.

Janez Lenarcic, Director of the OSCE Office for Demo- cratic Institutions and Human Rights

Mr. Lenarcic thanked OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver for the invitation to speak on ODIHR activities and also Ms. Habsburg Douglas for her energetic involvement in the OSCE's human dimension. He reiterated three reasons, previously outlined at the Human Dimension Seminar on the Rule of Law in Warsaw, why strengthening the rule of law is of particular importance to the OSCE. The first reason, Mr. Lenarcic said, is that the rule of law should serve as the foundation for

developing democratic institutions and the full realization of human rights. Second, it provides a framework for co-operation on other issues as it has a cross-dimensional character; finally, the rule of law makes it possible to build and maintain trust.

Mr. Lenarcic said that ODIHR activities supply policy-makers with the information and tools they need to better implement their OSCE commitments regarding the rule of law. He gave five examples of ODIHR activities in this field.

First is a joint ODIHR project with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which was designed to strengthen the capacity of the jurisdictions in the regions to process war crimes in a manner that is consistent with international standards. Second, trial monitoring is used as a tool to gather information on the functioning of justice systems and the promotion of fair trial guarantees. Third, a full-time Rule of Law Co-ordinator was appointed for the Central Asia region to follow legal developments and criminal justice reforms. Fourth, legislative assistance is given by ODIHR through 22 legal opinions on draft laws to provide timely advice while legislation is being drafted. Fifth, ODIHR provides technical assistance to participating States in countering terrorism.

Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Spe- cial Representative and Co-ordinator of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Addressing the OSCE PA for the first time in her new capacity as OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating

Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Trafficking in Human Beings, Judge Maria Grazia Giammarinaro underlined that trafficking is not only a serious crime but a gross violation of human rights. The manifestations of abuse and exploitation include prostitution, domestic servitude, forced begging and forced criminality. The problem has expanded beyond something that only women and girls face, Ms. Giammarinaro reported, with men and boys also increasingly coerced into predicaments that violate their human dignity.

Ms. Giammarinaro emphasized that these modern forms of slavery must be distinguished from the smuggling of migrants, which is a short-term relationship between the migrant and the smuggler after illegally crossing international borders. In contrast, trafficking of human beings is a crime in which people lose their freedom of choice and are reduced to commodities for the benefit of their exploiters. The Special Representative said that organized crime is deeply involved in the appropriation of enormous profits derived from human trafficking, which contributes to corruption and undermines the rule of law throughout the OSCE area.

Regarding anti-trafficking measures, Ms. Giammarinaro called for a comprehensive and co-ordinated policy that touches upon three main issues: prevention, effective law enforcement and support for victims of trafficking. She also called for multiple sides of the problem to be addressed, such as organized crime, migration, human rights protection, gender equality, development, and economic issues. Ms. Giammarinaro concluded her speech by calling on the OSCE to give its constant attention to the issue of trafficking in human beings and urging all 56 participating States to adopt appropriate national legislation.

Ambassador Philip Remler, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova

Focusing on the Transnistrian conflict, Ambassador Remler pointed out that unlike other protracted conflicts in the OSCE area there are no religious or ethnic aspects concerned and human ties remain strong on both sides of the Nistru River. There is however an enormous gap of trust between the two sides

which has prevented meaningful negotiations for several years.

Mr. Remler noted that his work has been primarily devoted to the promotion of trust between both sides of the conflict, so that they can solve fundamental problems together. Direct talks with both sides produced some positive results by the end of last year, he reported, and this year the work on confidence building measures will be restarted in the agreed format of 5+2 negotiations.

Mr. Remler pointed out that it is important not to equate meetings with results, but that without talks no results can be achieved. He stated that working with the PA's Parliamentary Team on Moldova is an important component of the conflict resolution process.

Regarding possible solutions to the conflict, the Ambassador noted that Moldova should be a viable option for Transnistrians as the state where they wish to reside and likewise Moldova should offer Transnistrians attractive terms. The solution is to unite the people of this region, not just the territory. While optimism concerning this conflict is premature, determination and commitment to finding a solution will never be out of place.

Ambassador Remler also touched upon topics such as the presence of operative groups and Moldovan-Romanian relations, as well as establishment of a civilian observer component and improvements in the structure of military observers.

Discussion

During the discussion period, a number of issues were addressed including co-operation of the OSCE PA and ODIHR in the field of election observation activities, especially in light of the international interest paid to the Ukrainian presidential elections held in January and February 2010. The possibility of co-operation with the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS was also raised.

In discussing humanitarian questions, some parliamentarians expressed concerns about the level of crime and corruption, violations of children's rights, the situation concerning journalists and also freedom of the media in the OSCE area.



Special Debate on the Situation in Afghanistan

Meeting in joint session on 19 February, nearly 50 OSCE parliamentarians participated in a debate on the situation in Afghanistan. Following an introduction of the topic by President Soares, OSCE PA Vice-President and Head of the Kazakh Delegation Kassym-Jomart Tokayev opened the discussion by outlining his assessment of the situation in Afghanistan and emphasizing that stabilizing the country is one of the main priorities of the Chairmanship. Kazakhstan is actively engaged in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, he stressed.

“One of Kazakhstan’s main priorities for this Chairmanship of the OSCE,” he said, “is to enhance the Organization’s role in the international efforts to rehabilitate Afghanistan.”

The Vice-President stressed that European and Asian efforts should be combined to build Afghanistan’s security. Stressing the role of parliamentary dialogue, he noted that this issue is on the agenda of the upcoming Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum in Almaty.

Mr. Tokayev also talked about the substantial funding to Afghanistan that Kazakhstan is providing, particularly for education, infrastructure, and agricultural equipment. Referring to the work of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which is heavily engaged in Afghanistan, he underlined the importance of co-operating with all the international organizations in the field.

The OSCE PA’s Special Representative on Afghanistan, Head of the French Delegation Michel Voisin, noted that public opinion in the West is largely hostile to the new strategy that emerged from the recent London Conference and expressed concern over the 2009 Presidential election. Mr. Voisin lamented that “coalition forces have not been able to provide adequate security, which has led to a crisis of faith.”

Regarding the improvement of governance and the rule of law, he emphasized that corruption must be fought vigorously and stressed that it is essential to tackle poverty in order to combat drug trafficking. Mr. Voisin spoke about the role of neighbouring countries, such as Pakistan, as an additional matter of concern. Involving China in the efforts to find a

solution to the Afghan crisis would be critical, he said.

Rob Ayasse, representing NATO’s Crisis Management and Operations Directorate, gave a brief presentation saying that 36 contributing nations have decided to send more forces to Afghanistan and that the Afghan national forces are growing. He said that the security transition will begin this year and that 2010 will be the year to see Afghanistan’s future take hold. The key global priorities of NATO, he explained, are transition and enhanced civil efforts.

The debate demonstrated the differing views that exist on the topic. Delegates called for further involvement in Afghanistan and an enhanced role of the OSCE in the dialogue for reconciliation, maintaining that there is no military solution for Afghanistan and that conciliation must prevail. Several delegations insisted that the presence of the troops has become part of the problem instead of the solution and suggested integrating the Taliban in the negotiations.

Others stressed the progress achieved since military operations began and considered both civilian and military means as necessary to complete the work undertaken in the country. It was also noted that neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Iran could play a role in the peace process. Many delegations noted that the recent London Conference provides a workable strategy moving forward.

Democracy, human rights and transparency are lacking in Afghanistan, some MPs pointed out, and therefore the OSCE’s role in this regard must be strengthened. It was also noted that the political will of Afghan authorities is crucial for success, and that failure in Afghanistan is unthinkable. The OSCE’s role in improving good governance and reducing corruption was stressed and in this regard a new strategy and new funds are needed, one delegate noted.

Some delegates lamented how long the war has gone on, wondering when it can be brought to a close. The immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops was called for by some, with the point made that violence perpetuates violence.

Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



**Address by OSCE Secretary General
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**

OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut noted that the debate and exchange of opinions within the Assembly contributes to the dialogue undertaken in the OSCE on security in all of its dimensions. He pointed out that the Ministerial Council in Athens had recognized that the PA should contribute to the Corfu Process.

Moreover, he paid homage to the active role played by President Soares and stressed that the anniversary of 35 years of the Helsinki Final Act and of 20 years of the Paris Charter represent an occasion to reflect on the overall role of the OSCE. The added value of the OSCE resides on a concept of indivisible, co-operative and global security, he said. In the Secretary General's view, the Corfu Process is a unique platform to discuss security matters and renew the dialogue on fundamental issues of security.

Mr. Perrin de Brichambaut stated that the possibility to organize a Summit in 2010 should be discussed and then decided on a unanimous basis. Concerning the debate on Afghanistan, he said that it is a demanding topic which calls for an open and honest dialogue. He briefed the Members on the OSCE's activities in the region, with particular focus on training programs and border projects. The OSCE can help Afghanistan in all three dimensions of security, he said.

In conclusion, the Secretary General mentioned the topics discussed and the decisions adopted at the Ministerial Council in Athens, stressing the importance of having a strong coherent effort working together with a positive, intense and open dialogue inside the OSCE family.



Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



Tone Tingsgaard



Philip Remler

Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Tone Tingsgaard

In the final session of the Winter Meeting, the Assembly heard a report by Special Representative on Gender Issues Tone Tingsgaard.

In her report, she emphasized that gender equality means both equal rights and equal recognition in society. Ms. Tingsgaard also pointed out that representation in decision-making bodies is crucial to reach equality and that as an international organization the OSCE has a vital role to play. She reminded Members that although last year the Standing Committee changed the rules of procedure to promote gender equality in the OSCE PA, out of 53 delegations present at the Winter Meeting, 20 still have no women represented.

Ms. Tingsgaard reported that gender inequality is a problem seen throughout the OSCE area and urged the Parliamentary Assembly to aim for a goal of 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men. Concerning high-level positions in the OSCE, she said they remain tilted heavily towards men. “As parliamentarians we have to make sure that women are nominated and supported throughout the recruitment process,” she stressed.

In conclusion, the Special Representative called on the OSCE Secretary General and the Permanent Council to start inquiring on this problem and pointed out that transparency could make the difference. “Lack of knowledge or ideas is not the reason behind the existing inequalities,” Ms. Tingsgaard concluded, “it is the lack of political will.”

The ninth Winter Meeting was brought to a close with brief remarks by the Chairs of the three General Committees, who summarized the work accomplished over the two days.



Janez Lenarcic



Rob Ayasse



Maria Grazia Giammarinaro







**PROGRAMME OF THE NINTH WINTER MEETING
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**
Vienna, 18 – 19 February 2010

Thursday, 18 February

- 09.00 – 11.30 **Standing Committee Meeting**
(Ratsaal, 5th floor)
- 11.45 – 13.00 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** (Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)
- Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. João Soares
 - Address by the President of the Austrian *Nationalrat*, Ms. Barbara Prammer
 - Address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, followed by a question & answer session
- 13.00 **Reception offered by the Delegation of Kazakhstan (Hofburg Zeremoniensaal)**
- 15.00 - 18.00 **General Committee on Political Affairs and Security**
(Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)
- 15.00 - 18.00 **General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment**
(Ratsaal, 5th floor)
- 18.15 Departure of buses from *Hofburg* to the Austrian Parliament
- 18.30 **Reception offered by the Austrian Parliament (Austrian Nationalrat)**

Friday, 19 February

- 09.00 – 12.00 **General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions**
(Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)
- 12.00 - 13.30 Lunch break
- 13.30 - 16.30 **Closing Joint Session of the three General Committees:** (Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)
- 13.30 – 15.30 **Special Debate on the situation in Afghanistan**
- 15.30 – 16.30
- Address by the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, followed by a question & answer session;
 - Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Ms. Tone Tingsgård followed by a debate;
 - Reports by the Chairs of the three General Committees;
 - Concluding Statement by the President of the OSCE PA Mr. João Soares



Philippe Nobile



Secretary General
Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly, and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and has a permanent staff of 16, including two staff members at the liason office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Tina Schøn



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Special
Representative
Andreas Nothelle



Presidential
Advisor
Andreas Baker



Director of
Communications
Klas Bergman



Assistant to the
Secretary General
Dana Bjerregaard



Liaison Officer
Marc Carillet



Programme
Officer
Anna Chernova



Senior Counsellor
Semyon Dzakhayev



Logistics Officer
Petra Jezkova



Conference
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Odile LeLarge



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