

# News from Copenhagen

## Leonid Ivanchenko Addresses OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

The Chair of the OSCE PA's Second General Committee, Leonid Ivanchenko (Russian Federation), represented the Assembly at the first half of the 2007 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, held in Vienna on 22 and 23 January. The theme of this year's Forum is 'Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management.'

In his address to the Forum Mr. Ivanchenko underlined the destabilising factors of pollution, climatic change, desertification, soil erosion, increasing energy demand, and ecological catastrophes. "Joint efforts are needed to cope with these menaces," he stated. In this context, he made clear that the participation and input of parliamentarians in events like the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum is essential as they are responsible for translating research and debate into law.

Mr. Ivanchenko also informed participants about the Assembly's activities and decisions in the field of environmental security, including the Tromsø Conference in May 2005 on the environmental concerns and security challenges in the Arctic region and the Resolution adopted during the 2006 Brussels Annual Session on 'Forming a Global System of Warning and Eliminating Consequences of Natural Disasters'. The second part of the 15<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum will be held in Prague from 21 to 23 May 2007.

## Belarus Working Group Plans Future Activities in Copenhagen



Åke Petersen, Morten Høglund, Uta Zapf and Kristian Pihl Lorentzen met with OSCE PA senior staff in Copenhagen

The Chair of the Assembly's ad hoc Working Group on Belarus, Uta Zapf (Germany), along with the newly appointed Members of the Group, Kristian Pihl Lorentzen (Denmark), and Morten Hoeglund (Norway), met with the Head of the OSCE Office in Minsk, Ambassador Åke Peterson, PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and senior staff of the Assembly in Copenhagen on 24 January 2007.

Ambassador Peterson briefed the Working Group on recent developments in the country. The Group particularly discussed preparations for the planned Seminar on 'Exploring the Opportunities for Belarus within the European Neighborhood Policy' scheduled for 15 March 2007 in Minsk.

## Winter Meeting Preparations Underway

Over 400 participants from some 50 OSCE countries will gather in Vienna on 22 and 23 February for the OSCE PA's sixth annual Winter Meeting. This two-day meeting will enable parliamentarians to follow-up on past work and to prepare for this year's Annual Session to be held in Kyiv in July.

The Winter Meeting will open with a Joint Session, followed by separate meetings of the three General Committees. These will provide an opportunity for each Committee to consider progress since the Brussels Annual Session, and to hear preparations by the Rapporteurs of the Committees for their upcoming Reports to be presented in Kyiv later this year. The theme for this year's Annual Session in Kyiv will be 'Implementation of OSCE Commitments'. The Winter Meeting also serves as an important opportunity for the Assembly to interact with senior representatives of the governmental structures of the OSCE.

PA President Göran Lenmarker has proposed a special debate focused on 'Energy Security in the OSCE area', to be held on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, prior to the Closing Joint Session.



The PA will meet in the OSCE premises at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna, 22-23 February

The Winter Meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations. A draft programme of the Meeting has been distributed to all Delegations and is available at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org).