

Current News from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

➤ Mr. Bruce George MP, Vice-President of the OSCE PA and Chair of the Defence Committee of the British House of Commons, co-chaired a **Seminar on Strengthening Parliamentary Defence Committees in Bosnia and Herzegovina** along with Ambassador Robert L. Barry, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH. The Seminar took place in Bled, Slovenia, on 27 and 28 January 2000. The participants represented the BiH State Parliament as well as both entity Parliaments, entity Ministries of Defence and entity armed forces. They also represented all three constituent peoples of BiH: Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats. The Seminar discussed the role of the parliamentary defence committees as well as the relationship between parliaments, governments and armed forces in the light of experiences from other European countries. Deputy Secretary General Mr. Pentti Väänänen accompanied the OSCE PA Delegation, which also included Mr. Engelbert Schaufler (MP, Austria), Mr. Josy Dubié (Senator, Belgium), Mr. Pieter DeCrem (MP, Belgium), Mr. Andras Barsony (MP, Hungary) and Mr. Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia).

➤ Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen (MP, Finland), Chair of the OSCE PA General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, chairs the recently established **Democracy Team on Moldova**, which will support the OSCE's efforts to bring about a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in Moldova. Along with Ms. Tone Tingsgård, Head of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA and also a member of the Democracy Team, Mr. Kiljunen will visit Moldova in early March. The Team will be accompanied in Moldova by Deputy Secretary General Mr Pentti Väänänen.

➤ At a meeting in Brussels on 9 February 2000, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe along with the European Parliament have decided to establish a **Parliamentary Troika on Belarus**. On behalf of the OSCE PA the meeting was attended by Mr. Adrian Severin MP, Chair of the PA ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus and Deputy Secretary General Mr. Pentti Väänänen. The Council of Europe was represented by Mr. Wolfgang Behrendt, MP, Rapporteur on Belarus and Mr. Petr Sich, Co-Secretary of the Political Affairs Committee. Mr. Jan Wiersma, MEP, Chair of the Delegation to Belarus and Mr. David Lowe, Counsellor, were present on behalf of the European Parliament. Mrs Emma Toledano Laredo of the European Commission attended the meeting as an observer. The co-operation between the three Institutions on Belarus will include the promotion of dialogue between political forces in Belarus and the discussion of future elections. The first joint activity will be a visit to Minsk on 2-3 March 2000, during which Mr. Adrian Severin will represent the OSCE PA.

➤ OSCE PA Vice-President Mr. Ihor Ostash MP (Ukraine) visits Kazakhstan in February 2000 for a **Follow up Mission on the Kazakh elections** of October 1999. Mr. Ostash also leads, as Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, the OSCE

observers for the **Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan** on 20 February 2000. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Mr. Ostash will be accompanied by Mr. Eric Rudenshiold, Director of Programmes of the International Secretariat.

➤ Ms. Tarja Halonen, former Member of the Finnish Delegation to the OSCE PA and Vice-Chair of the First General Committee, was elected President of the Republic of Finland on 6 February 2000.

➤ Ms. Valgerdur Sverrisdóttir, Member of the Icelandic Delegation to the OSCE PA, has been appointed Minister for Industry and Trade. Her place in the Icelandic Delegation will be taken by Ms. Jónína Bjartmarz.

➤ On 21 January 2000, Mr. Ihor Ostash, Vice President of the OSCE PA, was elected Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Verhovnaya Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine.

➤ President Degn will address a Joint Session of the Romanian Parliament as part of her official **visit to Romania** from 21-23 February 2000. She will meet with the President, the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Minister of Romania as well as with the Speaker of the House of Deputies and the President of the Senate. During the visit an Agreement will be signed between the OSCE PA and the Romanian Parliament on the organization of the 9th Annual Session to be held in Bucharest from 6-10 July 2000. The President will be accompanied by Secretary General Mr. R. Spencer Oliver and Deputy Secretary General Mr. Vitaly Evseyev.

➤ To date the International Secretariat has received four nominations for the 2000 **OSCE PA Prize for Journalism and Democracy**. The deadline for presenting candidates is the end of February. The Prize Committee of the Assembly will meet on 10 April 2000 in Antalya, Turkey, in conjunction with the Expanded Bureau Meeting.

➤ The OSCE PA has been asked by the OSCE/ODIHR to provide short-term observers to monitor the **Presidential Election of the Russian Federation**, on 26 March 2000. The International Secretariat, in conjunction with the OSCE/ODIHR is currently in the preliminary stages of making logistical arrangements. President Degn is again expected to lead the OSCE Observation Mission.

➤ In the opening months of this year, the following new **Research Fellows** join the International Secretariat: Joakim Lundström (Denmark), Stefanie Ortmann (Germany), Marsaili A. Fraser (Great Britain), Joseph Lloyd Worrall (Great Britain), Gianluca Rampolla Del Tindaro (Italy) and Helena Vázquez (Sweden).

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