

Current Information from the International Secretariat

President Severin holds talks in Vienna, addresses Permanent Council and meets OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

President Adrian Severin held a series of meetings and talks in Vienna on 29 August- 1 September 2000. On 30 August Mr. Severin participated in the 3rd Technical Conference on International Election Observation in Belarus. The conference was preceded by a working dinner on August 29, which was chaired by Mr. Severin, and included the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, the other two members of the Parliamentary Troika on Belarus.

The Technical Conference concluded that conditions are not sufficient for full scale international monitoring of the parliamentary elections on 15 October. However, it was agreed that the ODIHR would deploy a technical assessment mission and that the Parliamentary Troika would be present in Belarus during the elections.

On 31 August, Mr. Severin delivered his first statement as President of the Assembly to the Permanent Council. The President introduced his plans to expand the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly and strengthen its role in the OSCE decision making process. Among the plans for the near future, Mr. Severin mentioned the organization of a Winter Session of the Assembly in conjunction with the usual winter meeting in Vienna of the Standing Committee.

On 1 September, Mr. Severin met with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister, Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner. He informed her about the current and future activities of the Assembly and discussed the co-operation between the two Institutions. Mr. Severin also met with Ambassador Jutta Stefan-Bastl, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, and Ambassador Ján Kubiš, Secretary General of the OSCE. As part of his programme in Vienna, Mr. Severin also met with the Austrian Federal Chancellor, Mr. Wolfgang Schüssel and the Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, Mr. Alfred Gusenbauer.

Mr Severin was accompanied in Vienna by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen and Program Officer Paul LeGendre.

Chair of the State Duma represents OSCE PA in New York.

Mr. Gennady Seleznev, Vice-President of the OSCE PA and Chair of the Russian State Duma, represented the Assembly at the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments in New York on 30 August - 1 September. The Conference, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and attended by the Speakers from over 140 countries, took place on the eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit and highlighted the importance of international parliamentary co-operation. Mr. Seleznev was accompanied in New York by Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev.

Vice-President Ihor Ostash moderates Round Table on Elections in Kazakhstan.

On 2 September 2000 in Astana OSCE PA Vice-President Ihor Ostash moderated the "Round Table on Elections" that took place under the auspices of the OSCE (the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the ODIHR and the OSCE Centre in Almaty). The event, conducted in collaboration with the government of Kazakhstan and the Central Election Commission, brought together representatives of the Parliament, various government ministries and agencies, and civil society, including those political parties not represented in the Parliament. Mr. Baigeldi, Deputy Speaker of the Senate and Head of the Delegation of Kazakhstan to the OSCE PA, headed the official Kazakh delegation to the Round Table. The participants of

the Round Table discussed ways and means to implement the recommendations contained in the OSCE/ODIHR Final Report on the October 1999 Parliamentary Elections. Mr. Ostash was accompanied in Kazakhstan by Program Officer Paul LeGendre.

Vice-President Rita Süßmuth visits Kosovo

From 13-17 August 2000, Vice-President Rita Süßmuth, Chair of the recently established ad hoc Working Group on Kosovo, visited Pristina. She was joined by Mrs. Elisabeth Meijer (MP, Netherlands). The programme of the visit, worked out in close co-operation with the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Daan Everts, included meetings with several political parties as well as meetings with the editors of Koha Ditore and Zeri. The Delegation was accompanied by Alexander Staun-Rechnitzer, Adviser to the Secretary General. On 5 September Mr. Staun attended a Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg on the forthcoming elections in Kosovo.

President Severin addresses Parliamentary Stability Pact Summit in Zagreb.....

On 12 September, President Severin delivered a key note address at the Summit of Speakers of Parliaments of All Stability Pact Subjects in Zagreb. The two-day Summit focussed on the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the Stability Pact on South Eastern Europe. Speakers and Deputy Speakers from parliaments of nearly forty countries participated in the Summit which adopted the "Zagreb Declaration" on its final day. In his address, President Severin suggested that representatives of each of the three General Committees of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly be accredited as full fledged participants in the three Stability Pact Working Tables on Democratization and Human Rights, Economic Reconstruction and Security Issues. During the Summit Mr. Bodo Hombach, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact, welcomed Mr. Severin's suggestion. While in Zagreb, Mr. Severin paid a **visit to the OSCE Mission to Croatia** where he was briefed by Ambassador Bernard Poncet and members of the senior staff. Mr. Severin was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen and Press Counsellor Jan Jooren.

.....and Seminar in Italy

On 9 September, Mr. Severin addressed a Seminar in Pordenone, Italy on "The Role of the OSCE in Democratization and Investment in Eastern Europe". In his address to the Seminar, organized by the authorities and business representatives of the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region, Mr. Severin emphasized the importance of co-operative security as a general framework for democratic development throughout the OSCE area, pleading for more co-ordinated international efforts to foster investments that would ensure stable economic development. The Seminar was also addressed by Mr. Edouard Ballaman, Member of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA. Prior to the Seminar, President Severin visited the air base in Aviano where he was briefed by Italian and NATO commanders. Mr. Severin stressed that his visit to Aviano had a dual symbolism: it shows that the complementarity should be developed between OSCE and NATO and that Europeans can no longer live in a divided world.

Vice Chair of the First Committee visits International Secretariat in Copenhagen

On 14 September, Mr. Göran Lennmarker (MP, Sweden), Vice Chair of the Assembly's First Committee, paid a visit to the International Secretariat in Copenhagen where he was briefed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver on the activities of the Secretariat.

New Research Fellows

During September 2000, the following new **Research Fellows** have joined the International Secretariat: Mr. Andrés Blasco Cortés (Spain), Ms. Majken Skudstrup Haals (Denmark), Mr. Vitaly Tchoukanov (Russia), Ms Celia Donert (UK) and Ms. Alessandra Tognonato (Italy).

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