

## Hastings Presents Special Report on *The Future of the OSCE*

On Friday, June 24, OSCE PA President Alcee L. Hastings conveyed the report on the recently held 'Colloquium on the Future of the OSCE' to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel. It was also submitted to the OSCE Permanent Council, which welcomed the initiative by the Parliamentary Assembly, and to the PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability. The Ad Hoc Committee will discuss the Report before the Committee's Chairman, US Congressman Steny Hoyer, addresses the upcoming Annual Session in Washington, DC later this week.

At the invitation of the Head of the Swiss Foundation for World Affairs, Ambassador Edouard Brunner, and OSCE PA President Hastings, 17 experts on OSCE matters, including senior diplomats, politicians, and Members of the OSCE PA, submitted written contributions which were subsequently discussed at the colloquium. The Rapporteurs of the colloquium prepared a summary of the views presented during the meeting.

The primary conclusions of the Report (available in full at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org)) include the following:

The OSCE is facing serious difficulties as well as challenges to its purpose and political relevancy. Participants and contributors to the Colloquium unanimously agreed that the OSCE is still a valuable and relevant international organization that should continue to play a critical role in promoting stability and security in Europe. The political commitments made in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris as well as in other CSCE/OSCE documents are of great value. They should be preserved and upheld by the Participating States.

It was also agreed that the crisis of the OSCE is first and foremost political. The structural reform in and by itself will not solve the political problems that only participating States can address. The governments of the 55 OSCE states should reconfirm their commitment to a useful, credible and professional OSCE that serves the interest of all. They should also commit themselves, at the highest political levels, to the full implementation of all of their OSCE commitments and to future improvements in the structures and procedures of the Organization.

It was also agreed that:

1. The strengthening of OSCE activities in the field of security, economy and environment should not be done at the expense of the human dimension or to the detriment of basic OSCE values and principles. The security dimension should be expanded by further elaborating the Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security and increasing the role of the Forum for Security Co-operation.
2. Election observation is one of the most politically relevant and visible aspects of the Organization. The independence of these missions must be protected and efforts should

focus on expanding electoral standards without weakening existing commitments. It is recommended that ODIHR and the OSCE PA increase their co-operation in order to maintain and ensure the independence of the OSCE election observation that has been recently eroded. Finally, election assessments could be expanded further in Western democracies. Double standards in electoral observations should be avoided.

3. The role of the OSCE Secretary General should be strengthened in the political, budgetary and administrative spheres. The Secretary General, as well as and in consultation with the Chairman-in-Office, should be able to speak for the Organization and to make policy pronouncements as well as appropriate criticisms when OSCE commitments are not observed.

4. The OSCE should improve its ability to make timely decisions through adjusting its decision-making procedure. The consensus rules could be modified for decisions related to personnel, budget and administration.

5. Transparency and accountability can be improved by requiring that a country which blocks or holds up consensus must do so openly and be prepared to defend such position publicly.

6. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly could approve the budget and confirm the Secretary General once nominated, by an absolute or weighted majority vote and after appropriate consultations.

7. The budget must be adopted in a timely fashion and be commensurate to OSCE political objectives. A multi-year financial plan should be established in order to pursue longer term strategies.

8. Structural reform is needed to improve the functioning of the Organization: 1) Enhancing the analytical capabilities of the Secretariat by the creation of an Analysis and Prospective Unit; 2) Building permanent lessons learned capabilities by setting up a best Practices Unit; and 3) developing a truly operational civilian rapid reaction capability to intervene at time of crisis.

9. Professional standards should be raised in all OSCE structures. In order to attract and retain performing staff, fixed term limits on duration of service should be eliminated. At the same time, reliance on seconded personnel should be reduced. However, when seconded personnel are assigned, Governments should ensure that such assignment is for a substantial period of time - at least one or two years.

10. The OSCE needs to increase its network capabilities and reinforce its strategic co-operation with the EU, NATO, and the UN by opening liaison offices in Brussels and New York City.

11. The OSCE could export its comprehensive security concept, expertise such as election observation and assistance and share its values and experience beyond the OSCE area.