

News from Copenhagen

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Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

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Observation of parliamentary elections in Armenia

The International Secretariat has sent out a notice inviting OSCE parliamentarians to participate in the OSCE Election Observation Mission to the parliamentary elections in Armenia, scheduled for 25 May 2003. The observation Mission will be conducted in conjunction with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and other international institutions. According to the 1997 agreement between the ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office may appoint a Senior Member of Parliament to lead election monitoring operations and to present the conclusions of the OSCE observers. The deadline for registration with the International Secretariat in Copenhagen is 9 May 2003. For further information please contact Ms. Tina Schøn, Programme Officer.

OSCE PA Participates in European Parliament Hearing

Senator Anne-Marie Lizin (Belgium), a member of the PA's Parliamentary Team on Moldova, participated in the hearing on "A New European Union Strategy for South Eastern Europe" at the European Parliament in Brussels on 18 March 2003. Parliamentarians from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia and Moldova were also present.

In her statement, Senator Lizin emphasized the role of OSCE Field Missions in South Eastern Europe. She also noted the importance of fighting organized crime, including trafficking in human beings, and of developing proper border controls between states in the region.

Senator Lizin was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen, who held talks at the Secretariat of the European Parliament. These talks focussed on preparations for the "Parliamentary Conference on the Stability Pact", to be hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels on 21-22 May, and the "Parliamentary Seminar on Federalism", to be hosted by the OSCE PA in Moldova later this spring.

Swedish Delegation Meets OSCE Officials

On 19 February, in conjunction with the 2nd Winter Meeting in Vienna, Members of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA paid a working visit to the OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Institutions, and the Permanent Swedish OSCE Delegation in order to further prepare for their activities within the Parliamentary Assembly. The Winter Meeting was the first OSCE PA experience for some of the new Members of the Swedish Delegation, and they greatly appreciated the opportunity to learn about OSCE activities and achievements and to discuss face-to-face with high-level OSCE Officials. The Delegation met with Secretary General Ján Kubiš, who gave an overview of the progress within the Secretariat, emphasizing the importance of the ongoing management reform and new activities such as strategic police matters, anti-terrorism, and the enhanced role undertaken by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. The Swedish PA Delegation also met the Deputy Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Frederik Schiller, who briefed them on the role of the OSCE Field Missions. In an additional meeting with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Freimut Duve, the Delegation was informed about recent media initiatives in the OSCE area. Furthermore, the Swedish Delegation met with Dr. Helga Konrad from the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings and Ambassador Danielle Del Marmol-Guilbert of Belgium, Head of the Informal Working Group on Gender and Trafficking, who gave a briefing on OSCE projects to combat trafficking in human beings. The Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE in Vienna informed the parliamentarians about the OSCE's work and the role of the Permanent Council within the OSCE. Following the visit, Secretary of the Swedish OSCE PA Delegation, Ms. Kirsti Pulkka-Ericson, said:

"This was a very valuable experience for Members who have not been in contact with the Organization before. I would like to suggest to other OSCE PA Delegations to organize such study trips to Vienna either throughout the year or in conjunction with the Winter Meeting. Such visits provide an excellent opportunity to meet OSCE Officials in a smaller group with minimal expenses and organizational efforts". In recent years, Permanent National OSCE Delegations in Vienna have expressed a keen interest in receiving Members of Parliament and organizing briefings for them. The OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna can also help set up programmes, although it is fairly small and has limited resources.



On 25 March, in The Hague, OSCE PA President Bruce George, President of the Dutch House of Representatives Frans Weisglas (left) and President of the Senate Gerrit Braks (right) signed the Agreement between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Netherlands States General concerning the Twelfth Annual Session of the Assembly, to be held from 5-9 July 2003 in Rotterdam. During his visit to the Hague, President George also held meetings with the Head and Members of the Dutch Delegation to the OSCE PA, and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. In anticipation of the Annual Session, President George participated in a round table at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, focussing on research on OSCE topics, including the Clingendael paper 'The Effectiveness of OSCE Missions.'