

OSCE Parliamentarians, ODIHR to Lead Observation of Presidential Elections in Georgia

High level OSCE PA Leadership will observe the 4 January 2004 presidential elections in Georgia. The Delegation will be headed by President Bruce George, who has been appointed Special Co-ordinator of the incoming OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, to lead the OSCE Short-Term Observation Mission for these elections.

President George has appointed Senator Jerry Grafstein (Canada), the Assembly's Treasurer, Deputy Head of the OSCE PA Observer Group, which also includes Vice-Presidents Barbara Haering (Switzerland) and Giovanni Kessler (Italy). Another twenty Members from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Turkey and United Kingdom have also registered for this mission.

The OSCE Parliamentarians work in close co-operation with other international parliamentary institutions such as the Council of Europe PA and the European Parliament.

The delegation will also include Secretary-General Spencer Oliver, Press Counsellor Jan Jooren, and Programme Officer Tina Schøn from the International Secretariat.

On 5 January, President George will deliver the preliminary post-election statement in conjunction with other appropriate officials, representing the Council of Europe PA, the European Parliament and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The OSCE Election Observation Mission is a joint effort between the OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE PA. The ODIHR deploys long-term observers in the field several weeks before election day as well as short-term observers seconded by OSCE participating States, and provides the framework for the deployment of the short-term parliamentary observers.

The OSCE Observation Mission will provide an assessment of the conduct of the elections, the political campaign and the role of the media.

Head of Norwegian Delegation Visits Copenhagen



Mr. Bjørn Hernæs, Head of the Norwegian Delegation to the OSCE PA, paid a visit to the International Secretariat on December 11 to review the PA's plans for the coming year. Mr. Hernæs, who participated in the OSCE PA election observation mission in both Moscow and St. Petersburg, discussed the role of the PA and the ODIHR in election monitoring and presented some ideas about how the work can be further improved.

This was the second visit made by Mr. Hernæs to the International Secretariat since he has been Chairman of the Norwegian Delegation.

He was accompanied by the new Norwegian Secretary of Delegation, Mr. Allon Groth. Following the visit to Copenhagen, they travelled to Warsaw for a visit to the ODIHR offices. During the visit to Copenhagen, discussions were also held on the preparations for the Regional Seminar to be hosted by the Norwegians in 2005, including proposed subjects for consideration at the event.

Mr. Hernæs also conveyed an invitation from the Speaker of the Norwegian Stortinget to President George to pay an official visit to Norway in the near future.

Vice-President Ostash to Lead Serbian Election Observers

Twelve Parliamentarians from nine countries will participate in the OSCE PA's election observation mission to Serbia on 28 December 2003. Vice-President of the PA, Ihor Ostash (Ukraine), will lead the Delegation.

Other Members are Gert Weisskirchen (Germany, Vice-President of the PA), Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria), Francoise Colinia (Belgium), Patrick Moriau (Belgium), Anissa Temsamani (Belgium), Søren Søndergaard (Denmark), Jozsef Ekes (Hungary), Gabor Hars (Hungary), Kjell Engebretsen (Norway), Ciril Pucko (Slovenia) and Thomas Cox (UK).

The Delegation will be accompanied by Pentti Väänänen, Deputy Secretary General and Igors Aizstraus, Secretary of the Latvian Delegation.

On 27 December, the parliamentarians will have meetings and a briefing session in Belgrade.

The election observation mission will be a joint operation between the OSCE PA, ODIHR and the Council of Europe PA. The three institutions will issue a joint preliminary statement on 29 December.