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Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Latvia

A Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the two day general elections in Latvia on 30 September and 1 October 1995 at the invitation of Saeima, the Latvian Parliament. The Delegation, led by Mr. Peter Kapral, Member of the Austrian Parliament, included seven parliamentarians from six countries: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Italy, Moldova, and Russia.

On 28 and 29 September the Delegation met with the OSCE Mission to Latvia, representatives of the Central Election Commission, the Saeima Legal Affairs Committee, the Saeima Legal Office, as well as representatives of most of the political parties and the media. On 30 September and 1 October 1995 members of the Delegation visited two district electoral commissions and 64 polling stations in both cities and rural areas throughout each of Latvia's five constituencies.

The Delegation concludes that Latvian law provides the citizens with good conditions for free and fair elections. Citizens have adequate opportunity to participate in the political process. Both political parties and candidates were allowed to campaign freely. The media is independent and working in a free manner. On both local and regional levels the electoral authorities appeared competent and seemed to work in accordance with the law. However, some unclear provisions in the Election Law did result in confusion over candidates removed from party lists by the Central Election Commission. The district, city and local polling commissions, as well as the voters themselves, appeared to have been adequately instructed in the electoral process.

Based on its findings the Delegation concludes that the 30 September and 1 October 1995 elections to the Latvian Parliament were free and fair.

The Delegation is aware that a substantial number of persons living permanently in Latvia do not have citizenship of any state and hopes that this situation will be satisfactorily resolved. The services of the OSCE are available in this matter.

The Delegation will give its final report to the Standing Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its meeting 11 January 1996 in Vienna.

Further information can be obtained from the International Secretariat in Copenhagen by contacting Mr. Pentti Väänänen, Deputy Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Jeffrey Carlson, Assistant, or Mr. Dan Hindsgaul, Assistant.

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