

OSCE PA Special Representative Anne-Marie Lizin visits Guantánamo detention facilities

The President of the Belgian Senate, Mrs. Anne-Marie Lizin, who is the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on Guantánamo, visited the US detention facility at Guantánamo Bay (Cuba) on Friday 3 March 2006. Mrs. Lizin is the first European political personality to officially visit Guantánamo.

Mrs. Lizin, who is also the Head of the Belgian Delegation to the OSCE PA and Rapporteur of the Assembly's General Committee on Human Rights, visited the detention facility on a fact-finding mission on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, upon the invitation of the US Department of Defense.

OSCE PA President Alcee L. Hastings appointed Mrs. Lizin as his Special Representative in February 2005 to follow up and report to the Assembly on the situation of detainees in the facility. President Hastings has strongly encouraged and facilitated Mrs. Lizin's visit.

The state of prisoners in the detention facility has long been an area of interest to the Assembly, which passed a resolution on the issue in July 2003. During the Assembly's Annual Session in Washington, DC, in July, Mrs. Lizin presented a report on her activities and recommendations to date.

In preparation for her visit Mrs. Lizin held meetings on Thursday 2 March with senior representatives from the US State Department and the US Department of Defense. In the State Department Mrs. Lizin met with Mr. Daniel

Fried (Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs) and Mr. John Bellinger (State Department Legal Adviser). In the Department of Defense Mrs. Lizin was briefed by several senior officers from Detainee Affairs, Joint Staff, General Counsel and Health Affairs. Senator Lizin also met with the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr Gordon England.

During her visit to the detention facilities in Guantánamo,

Mrs. Lizin was received and briefed by General Hood, Commander of the Joint Task Force, Guantánamo. Mrs. Lizin visited the camps and cells housing the detainees and observed some of the operations in the facilities.

Senator Lizin met with intelligence and interrogation staff, witnessed an interrogation, and were shown some of the material evidence gathered from detainees.

The visit to the detention facilities is part of Mrs. Lizin's follow-up work to her first report on the issue. Based on her findings during the visit and related briefings in Washington, Mrs. Lizin will prepare a detailed report for the Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session in Brussels, July 3 to 7 2006.

Mrs. Lizin was accompanied by Adviser Gustavo Pallarés on behalf of the OSCE PA International Secretariat; Mrs. Françoise Themelin, Secretary of the Belgian Senate Delegation to the OSCE PA; Prof. Simon Petermann and two Belgian experts on anti-terrorism.



OSCE PA election observation missions

Belarus, March 19

The OSCE PA will be deploying over 120 parliamentarians and senior parliamentary staff to observe the Belarusian Presidential Elections on March 19. This mission will be the largest observation effort ever deployed by the Parliamentary Assembly, in its twelve years of election observation in the OSCE area. Since 1993, the Assembly has sent over 2000 parliamentarians to observe 75 elections.

Before being deployed around the country on election day, Parliamentarians will receive briefings on March 17 and 18 with political, media and civil society leaders, as well as senior OSCE experts.

Ukraine, March 26

Delegations are reminded that the deadline for registering to observe the March 26 Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine is this **Friday, March 10**. All Members interested in taking part in this Mission are requested to return all of the necessary information, including the completed CEC form, copy of passport and arrival and departure details to the International Secretariat by this Friday.

The briefing programme in Ukraine will take place on Friday March 24 and Saturday March 25. Participants will observe in polling stations throughout the day on Sunday, and take part in a debriefing on Monday March 27.