

Montenegrin elections largely in line with international standards



OSCE PA Vice-President Soares (right) announced the findings of the IEOM, along with Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco), Head of the Delegation of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly

Delivering the preliminary statement of the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to the 10 September 2006 parliamentary elections in Montenegro, OSCE PA Vice-President João Soares announced that the elections were largely in line with OSCE commitments. A number of challenges remain to be addressed, he said, but stressed that “the people of the world’s newest country can be proud that their first elections since gaining independence meet international electoral standards”. Vice-President Soares, appointed by the Chairman-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers, was speaking at a press conference on 11 September in Podgorica.

The observation mission noted that the campaign had been calm and orderly, but that the campaign environment had deteriorated in the last days before the elections. Also, the legal framework was found to have provided an adequate basis for the elections, however contrary to good practice the Election Law was amended after the elections were called. Vice-President Soares, who also headed the OSCE PA observation mission, encouraged working together with parliamentary colleagues in Montenegro to overcome the noted challenges.

The IEOM was a joint undertaking of the OSCE PA, Council of Europe PA, and the OSCE/ODIHR.

President Lennmarker visits OSCE Institutions in Warsaw

On 1 September, OSCE PA President Göran Lennmarker visited the Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk in Warsaw. Ambassador Kasprzyk briefed President Lennmarker on the situation in the

region of Nagorno-Karabakh and on the recent activities of the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. In addition, they discussed the role of parliamentarians and the parliamentary dimension in the conflict settlement process.

In addition to meeting with Ambassador Kasprzyk, the President paid a visit to the headquarters of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw. ODIHR Director Christian Strohal gave an overview of the Office’s activities. The visit also provided President Lennmarker with the opportunity to meet staff from the ODIHR and learn more about the projects being conducted by the Office, as well as to discuss future co-operation. In the meetings, President Lennmarker highlighted the role played by Members of Parliament in OSCE activities, and particularly the Assembly’s leadership role in OSCE election observation. Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn accompanied President Lennmarker on his visit.

