

News from Copenhagen

David Heath appointed to lead OSCE short-term observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Upon the recommendation of President Göran Lennmarker, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Minister Karel De Gucht, has appointed David Heath, Member of the UK Delegation to the PA, as his Special Co-ordinator for the OSCE election observation mission being deployed to the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1 October 2006. Heath, who has participated in several previous election missions, will lead the OSCE short-term observation mission and will deliver the preliminary post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE on the day following the elections. Mr. Heath will also lead the OSCE PA delegation of more than forty parliamentarians, which will work in close co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR long-term mission and observers from the PA of the Council of Europe.

As directly elected officials, parliamentarians apply their

unique knowledge of electoral processes to assess the conduct of the elections and the political campaign, in relation to OSCE commitments. The parliamentarians receive direct briefings prior to the elections from political, media and civil society leaders, as well as OSCE experts.

An experienced OSCE PA core staff team will be headed by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schön, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, and include Press Officer Andreas Baker and Programme Officer Anna Chernova. On election day, the observers will be deployed to polling stations to observe the sealing of ballot boxes, voting, and the counting of ballots.



CiO's Personal Envoys on election observation visit PA Secretariat

On 11 and 21 September 2006 respectively, Francois-Xavier de Donnea (MP, Belgium) and Jan Petersen (MP, Norway) visited Copenhagen in conjunction with their work on reviewing OSCE election observation activities. Appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, the Personal Envoys, or 'monitors of the monitors,' are studying the Organization's observation work, with a view to suggesting improvements in the functioning of these missions. Mr. de Donnea was accompanied by Thierry Vuylsteke, from the Belgian Foreign Ministry.

The Envoys are expected to report their findings and recommendations to the Chairman-in-Office during the coming months.

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and other senior staff met with the members of the team and briefed

them on the OSCE PA election observation programme. The team was provided with an overview of the history of the Assembly's leading role in election observation, as well as the role played by the OSCE PA's partners in these missions. Within the framework of the OSCE, the Assembly works in close co-operation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The OSCE PA also closely co-operates with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Since the OSCE PA first began observing elections in 1993, upon the urging of then Chair-in-Office, Swedish Foreign Minister Baroness Margaretha af Ugglas, the Assembly has deployed more than two thousand parliamentarians from more than forty countries to observe elections across the OSCE region.

Deadlines reminder

All delegations are reminded of the following deadlines for registering for upcoming OSCE PA activities:

Election observation in Latvia (7 October)
Registration deadline: 27 September

OSCE PA Fall Meetings in Malta (17-20 November)
Registration deadline: 29 September

Delegations that are interested in participating in these activities are kindly requested to submit their registration and hotel confirmation forms to the International Secretariat before these deadlines.

OSCE Needs Assessment Mission to Tajikistan

An OSCE Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) visited the Republic of Tajikistan from 25-31 August 2006. Programme Officer Anna Chernova participated on behalf of the OSCE PA. Presidential Elections in Tajikistan have been called for Monday, 6 November 2006, and the OSCE has been invited to observe the elections.

The NAM met with Tajik authorities, including the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda, leaders of political parties, members of the international community, and media and civil society representatives. The NAM aimed to evaluate the political situation in the run-up to the Presidential Elections, and evaluate the need for an OSCE Election Observation Mission. Kimmo Kiljunen, from Finland, is expected to lead an OSCE PA delegation to monitor the elections.