

Kiljunen: Lack of serious campaign and credible alternatives in Tajikistan Presidential election

“The lack of any serious campaign and credible alternatives undermined this election to a degree that it did not provide an adequate test of Tajikistan’s commitments to democratic elections,” said Kimmo Kiljunen, delivering the OSCE statement on the November 6 Presidential election in Tajikistan. Speaking at a 7 November press conference in Dushanbe, he noted that a number of other substantial shortcomings also undermined the electoral process. Kiljunen, a Member of the Finnish Delegation to the PA, was appointed as the Special Co-ordinator for the OSCE election observation mission.

While there was a field of five candidates, voters did not have the opportunity to choose between genuinely different political forces, and there was almost no political debate among the candidates. Kiljunen also raised concern about the significant obstacle posed by the requirement for candidates to collect supporting signatures from five percent of the entire electorate. He also noted positive aspects, including a voter education campaign to discourage family and proxy voting and efforts by the electoral authorities to enable voting by citizens of Tajikistan outside of the country.

In addition to leading the overall OSCE short term observation mission, Kiljunen headed the mission from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, supported by Vice-President João Soares from Portugal.

From the International Secretariat the delegation was accompanied by Programme Officer Anna Chernova and Press Officer Andreas Baker.



Final preparations for Malta Autumn Meetings



From 17 to 20 November 2006 the OSCE PA will hold its Autumn Meetings in Malta. The Autumn Meetings consist of a Conference on ‘Immigration, Integration and Cross-Cultural Dialogue: The Role of the OSCE’, the Mediterranean Forum, and a meeting of the Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations.

Final preparations are underway in Copenhagen and in Malta, and the International Secretariat has registered over

304 participants from 51 countries.

OSCE PA President Göran Lenmarker will preside over the Meetings. Keynote speakers expected to address the OSCE PA Autumn Meetings include the Foreign Minister of Malta, Michael Frendo; the Speaker of the Parliament of Malta, Anton Tabone; and the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut.

The Autumn Conference serves as an opportunity for Members of the Assembly to focus on issues of specific interest that affect OSCE States, and to interact with experts on these topical matters.

The Standing Committee is expected to make a decision on proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure, following the unanimous recommendation by the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure. Proposals have been distributed to PA Delegations, following the consideration of all proposals.

On 20 November, the Maltese hosts will organize an excursion for participants.