

President Lennmarker addresses OSCE Permanent Council

OSCE PA President Göran Lennmarker today addressed the representatives of the OSCE participating States at the Permanent Council, in Vienna. The President took the opportunity to encourage greater input by members of the Permanent Council on OSCE Parliamentary Assembly recommendations.

Lennmarker stressed the continuing relevance of the OSCE, particularly in the fields of conflict resolution, and strengthening democracy and human rights. He also noted the importance of transatlantic relations and the active participation of Central Asian countries in the work of the OSCE. In this regard, he welcomed Kazakhstan's interest in assuming the role of Chairmanship-in-Office in 2009. The President also remarked on the importance of parliamentary involvement in oversight of the OSCE. He reiterated recommendations from the Assembly's Brussels Declaration, which stress the importance of effective monitoring to

increase efficiency and transparency in the Organization. Lennmarker noted that Parliamentarians can provide valuable assistance to the development of the Organization through such oversight.

President Lennmarker also discussed OSCE election observation activities, noting the Assembly's calls for continued political leadership by parliamentarians of such missions. He emphasized the importance of only applying agreed OSCE commitments during such missions, and warned of the dangers of applying double standards.

Finally, the President noted the importance of reforming the decision making mechanisms of the OSCE in order to increase the flexibility and relevance of the Organization.

President Lennmarker was accompanied by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, and Liaison Officer Andres Blasco from the International Secretariat.

Lennmarker pays visit to Germany and meets with OSCE Chairman-in-Office in Brussels

From 6 to 8 November, President Lennmarker visited Berlin to discuss OSCE issues and expectations for the upcoming OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Brussels next month. The President also took the opportunity to discuss preparations for the upcoming German Presidency of the EU.

Mr. Lennmarker met with the German Delegation to the OSCE PA, including Vice-Speaker of the German Bundestag Wolfgang Thierse. He also met with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee as well as with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In all of the meetings, President Lennmarker stressed the need to strengthen the role of the Parliamentary Assembly within the OSCE as a forum for parliamentary dialogue. He highlighted the role Members of Parliament play nationally and internationally when it comes to parliamentary oversight and providing transparency and accountability. He further emphasized that in conflict resolution and rehabilitation, parliamentary diplomacy can play a unique role in informing the public and seeking acceptance for a solution negotiated between Governments. In addition, President Lennmarker stressed the important role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in election observation. He emphasized that as parliamentarians are elected by the public, they have unique experience in elections and provide credibility and visibility to the OSCE in this field. President Lennmarker was accompanied OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle and Åsa Ekwall, Advisor from the Swedish Parliament.



On 8 November in Brussels, President Lennmarker met the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht. The discussion mainly focussed on the preparations for the upcoming Ministerial Council Meeting and the state of affairs within the OSCE. Unresolved conflicts and the Minister's recent visit to Kazakhstan as well as the role of OSCE election observation missions were also discussed. In accordance with usual practice, the Minister also invited President Lennmarker to address the Ministerial Council at the opening session of the Ministerial Council in Brussels, December 4.