

## Soares leads delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina



President Joao Soares paying a visit to Camp Butmir of the International Police Unit



President Soares meets with UN High Representative Valentin Inzko in Sarajevo

After having visited OSCE offices in Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina and Tirana last year, OSCE PA President Joao Soares continues his programme in South East Europe with an official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) this week. The delegation, led by President Soares, includes the PA's Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) and Patrick Moriau (Belgium).

Upon arrival in Sarajevo on 23 March, the PA delegation paid a visit to Camp Butmir of the International Police Unit, where they received an in-depth briefing on the tasks and the working methods of the IPU.

The visit, which ends Saturday 27 March, includes meetings with UN High Representative Valentin Inzko, the Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, Ambassador Gary D. Robbins and all sectors of the OSCE Mission including in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar.

Meetings will also be held with the BiH Presidency, the Foreign Minister, the leadership of the two Houses of the BiH parliament, Republika Srpska (RS) Prime Minister Milorad Dodik and the Speaker of the RS Parliament, as well as the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mustafa Mujezinovic, and with the Federation parliament's leadership.

The delegation also intends to meet with the new OSCE Representative of the Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic. Finally, President Soares will address a Conference "Reconciling for the Future: Challenges and EU Integration Perspectives for the Western Balkans" in Mostar.

The PA delegation also includes Ambassador Andreas Nothelle and Programme Officer Roberto Montella from the PA Vienna Liaison Office, and Nuno Paixao from the Parliament of Portugal.

## Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum preparations continue

Preparations are well under way for the Second Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum to be held in Almaty, on 14-16 May 2010, hosted by the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan in co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The Forum will include parliamentarians from OSCE participating States, Mediterranean and Asian partner countries, as well as parliamentarians from China and Pakistan, who will participate as guests.

The theme of the Forum is "The OSCE Eurasian Dimension" and will include pressing issues on regional security (including Afghanistan, terrorism and disarmament), economic concerns (trade, resource management, environmental issues), and the human dimension (religious tolerance, political development, freedom of the media, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings and gender equality).

The conference will take place at the Intercontinental Almaty Hotel. Please note that the deadline for registration is 20 April. Further information is available at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org).



Uta Zapf at the recent Winter Meeting in Vienna

## Parliamentary Troika condemns capital executions in Belarus

The Chair of the PA's Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, Uta Zapf, joined with her colleagues from the Council of Europe PA and European Parliament to condemn the recently reported executions of Andrei Zhuk and Vasily Yuzepchuk, in Belarus.

The executions were reported to have taken place in secrecy last week and have yet to be confirmed by the authorities.

The joint statement issued today firmly condemned the executions and noted that the decision is "at odds with the initiative of setting up an ad hoc group in the Belarusian parliament to consider the issue of capital punishment."