

## OSCE PA delegation encourages consensus-based constitutional reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina



President Soares, together with RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik



President Soares, together with FBiH Prime Minister Mustafa Mujezinovic

From 23 to 27 March President Joao Soares together with OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe, Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) and Patrick Moriau (Belgium) conducted a four day official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The delegation was briefed on the overall political and economic situation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. In Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, President Soares stressed the importance of conducting an all inclusive and consensus based process of constitutional reforms in view of the general elections to be held by the end of this year. President Soares offered the OSCE PA's support for this very important process and informed interlocutors that the Assembly intends to be present in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the general elections.

The visit included meetings with Nebojsa Radmanovic, member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sven Alkalaj, Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska; Mustafa Mujezinovic, Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the leadership of the two Houses of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament and Igor Radojicic, Speaker of the Republika Srpska Parliament. The delegation also met with the High Representative Valentin Inzko and the Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Gary Robbins, and conducted field visits to the OSCE Regional offices of Banja Luka and Mostar. President Soares applauded the work being conducted by the OSCE Mission throughout the country.

The delegation also encouraged all the responsible authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to move forward on the process of eliminating the surplus of ammunition as a confidence building measure.

In addition, President Soares noted the active role played by Bosnia and Herzegovina within international organizations,

particularly in light of the country's current membership on the UN Security Council and the recent appointment of Ms. Dunja Mijatovic as OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. While in Sarajevo, President Soares also took the opportunity to meet Ms. Mijatovic.

With all interlocutors, President Soares committed to encourage members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly that belong to the EU to pressure their governments in order to grant access by Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens to the "Schengen White list" for Visa Liberalization.

In Mostar, President Soares also addressed a Conference on "Reconciling for the Future: Challenges and EU Integration Perspectives for the Western Balkans," attended by members of the NGO sector from South East Europe.

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

### Preparations for Oslo continue

A team from the Assembly's International Secretariat visited Oslo on 24 March in preparation for this year's Annual Session. Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, who led the Secretariat's team, praised the excellent preparations by the Norwegian hosts, expressing his confidence in a fruitful and well-organized Session. The Nineteenth Annual Session of the Assembly will be held in the Oslo Congress Centre from Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 July 2010, hosted by the Stortinget (Parliament of Norway).

Mr. Pallares, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhiev, Administrative Director Kurt Lerras and Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge visited the premises for the Session and held meetings with officials of the International Secretariat of the Stortinget and all those responsible for all aspects of the Session's organization.