

News from Copenhagen

Number 14

Current Information from the International Secretariat 22 November 2000

President Severin Addresses NATO Parliamentarians

At the Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Berlin on 21 November 2000, President Severin delivered a speech on the relationship between the OSCE and NATO, and the part that their two Parliamentary Assemblies had to play. Beginning by emphasizing the fluidity of international politics at the dawn of the 21st century and the increased role required of both NATO and the OSCE, Mr. Severin then went on to describe the complementary nature of the two institutions. *"The realm of the OSCE is confidence-building and transparency, conflict early-warning and prevention,"* said Mr. Severin, *"...The realm of NATO, as a military alliance, is essentially to make peace through force where the OSCE is unable to keep it through negotiation."*

As examples of the potential benefits of close cooperation, Mr. Severin pointed to both Bosnia and Kosovo. In both cases, it was NATO that possessed the military might and political will necessary to force an end to the bloodshed and provide the security necessary to allow the OSCE to subsequently embark upon the arduous task of nation-building.

Given the need for collaboration between the two organizations, Mr. Severin explained the pivotal role that both the NATO and OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies had to play. Not only are the two Parliamentary Assemblies valuable forums for inter-parliamentary dialogue, but *"as the directly-elected representatives of our constituent populations and members of our national legislatures,"* stated Mr. Severin, *"we are all in positions to promote the integration of OSCE initiatives with those of NATO, both through the rallying of public opinion and through individual governments' action."* The President was accompanied by Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev

Parliamentarians Monitor Elections in Azerbaijan and Bosnia & Herzegovina

During November OSCE Parliamentarians monitored elections in Azerbaijan and Bosnia & Herzegovina. The parliamentarians concluded that the Azerbaijani elections fell short of international standards whilst the elections in Bosnia & Herzegovina marked a significant improvement to all previous elections

The twenty-one members of the OSCE Parliamentary team observing the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan on 5 November 2000 concluded in the preliminary statement, that although progress had been made, especially with regard to political pluralism and in connection to the media situation, the elections fell short of international standards. The most serious problems mentioned were the registration of single candidates, the lack of a transparent appeals process and manipulation of the electoral procedures as well as voter turnout.

Mrs. Paula Kokkonen (MP, Finland), Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for the elections in Azerbaijan, stated that *"The elections were marred by numerous instances of serious irregularities, in particular a completely flawed counting process."*

After the elections, the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan declared its willingness to address problems related to the elections and in this connection the results in a district in Baku were annulled due to reports of fraud.

Prior to election day, the OSCE PA Delegation, consisting of Members of Parliament from thirteen Member States, met with the President of Azerbaijan, the Speaker of Parliament, representatives of the political parties, the Chairman and two Secretaries of the Central Election Commission, representatives of the media, the Head of the OSCE Office in Baku, the Ambassadors from Russia, France, Italy and US, representatives of NDI, IFES, European Institute for the media as well as with ODIHR core staff in Baku and the OSCE long term observers. On election day, the OSCE Parliamentarians visited polling stations in and around Baku. The Delegation was accompanied by Programme Officer Mr. Paul LeGendre and Research Co-ordinator, Ms. Tina Schøn from the International Secretariat.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

"These elections mark a significant improvement to all previous elections and are an important step forward in the long and difficult way to consolidate democracy and fully implement the



The C-i-O Special Representative Mrs. Paula Kokkonen, (MP, Finland) during the General Elections in Azerbaijan

Dayton Agreement." Said OSCE PA Vice-President Bruce George, who led the nineteen member OSCE Parliamentary Team observing the general elections in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

In the Statement on the 11 November 2000 Elections the parliamentary observers, from eight Member States, further congratulated the OSCE and, in particular, the thousands of citizens of BiH for their excellent performance in organizing these general elections. The Statement called on the newly elected leadership of BiH to depart from the narrow nationalism and policy of confrontation and to build coalitions capable of making the institutions function according to the principles of democracy and human rights.

Prior to Election Day the parliamentarians were extensively briefed by representatives of political parties and organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The briefings also included meetings with High Representative Wolfgang Petrisch, Head of the OSCE Mission Ambassador Robert L. Barry, Foreign Minister Jadranko Prlic and SFOR Commander Lieutenant General Michael L. Dodson.

During Election Day the parliamentary observers visited more than 300 polling stations in Banja Luka, Zenica, Sarajevo, Pale, Mostar, Foca, Gorazde, Vlasenica, Tuzla and Srebrenica. The OSCE PA Delegation was accompanied by Deputy Secretary-General Pentti Väänänen, Press Counsellor Jan Jooren and Research Assistant Joakim Lundström.



osce PA
OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

For further information please contact: Mr. Jan Jooren, Counsellor, Public Affairs
E-mail press.counsellor@oscepa.dk
Tel: +45 33 37 80 36, Fax: +45 33 37 80 30.