

News from Copenhagen

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Current Information from the International Secretariat

1 December 2000

Bureau meets in Vienna

Chaired by President Severin the Assembly's Bureau held a meeting in Vienna on 26 November 2000. After welcoming remarks by the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Dr. Heinz Fischer, the Bureau was addressed by the OSCE Chairperson in Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Ms. Ferrero-Waldner, who briefed the parliamentarians extensively on recent activities of the OSCE Chairmanship and took questions from the floor.

The Members of the Bureau also heard reports on the recent parliamentary election missions in Belarus, Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as a report on the recent Democracy Team visit to Kosovo. Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported on activities of the International Secretariat. Prior to the meeting the Bureau Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, chaired by Vice-President Bruce George, considered a Working Draft containing the various recommendations for changes in the Rules of Procedure as put forward since October by various members of the Assembly, Members of the Bureau, Secretaries of Delegation and staff of the Secretariat. Next phase in the process will be the Bureau's co-sponsoring of proposals for consideration by the Standing Committee at the next meeting in February 2001.

President Severin Addresses Eighth OSCE Ministerial Council

On Monday the 27th of November, President Adrian Severin addressed the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna. Mr. Severin began by noting the profound changes that had taken place in the European security environment since the fall of the Berlin Wall, resulting in new challenges, threats, and opportunities for the OSCE. President Severin emphasized that co-operation between OSCE states is important now more than ever as the organization has moved beyond the simple role that it played during the Cold War as a link between two opposing camps. "It is wrong to speak today about 'enlargements'," said Mr. Severin, "since our goals must be reconciliation and unification." The new imperative of the OSCE is to define a new system of Euro-Atlantic collective security through "the integration of the former enemies into new cooperative structures, as well as their conversion into true partners."



President Adrian Severin and Secretary General Spencer Oliver at the OSCE Ministerial in Vienna

Because of the critical significance of co-operation in the post-Cold War environment, Mr. Severin underlined the dangers of double standards and the temptation of some states within the OSCE to see themselves as judges or teachers. "None of us," he said, "is beyond reproach in terms of meeting our shared values and standards." The President urged caution in this regard with the workings of the OSCE Institutions, as well. Although the OSCE is in many ways the standard-bearer of the democratization effort, issues such as a lack of transparency and accountability within its

decision-making process undermine its efforts. Flaws such as the secret veto within the consensus-driven OSCE must be corrected, and the precise competences of OSCE institutions defined, particularly those of the under-utilized Parliamentary Assembly. "As an Assembly of more than three hundred directly elected parliamentarians," concluded President Severin, "we are pleased to provide the democratic foundation which is so crucial for the success of the OSCE. I hope that this approach will not pass unnoticed and will not remain unused."

Elections in Serbia

The OSCE PA plans to monitor elections in Serbia on 23/12/2000 with President Severin leading the monitoring. Those interested in participating, please contact Ms. Tina Schön either by telephone +4533378039, telefax +4533378030 or e-mail tina@oscepa.dk BEFORE 12 December.



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