

News from Copenhagen

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President Severin visits fYR of Macedonia and Kosovo

On 19 March 2001 the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Adrian Severin addressed the Second Conference of Parliaments of South-East Europe in Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In his speech, Mr. Severin addressed the background of much of the conflict that has gripped the region, citing the painful process that South-East Europe has had to undergo since the fall of totalitarian regimes. The only way to overcome the current difficulties, Mr. Severin asserted, is to "promote a strategy of common projects," to replace the "identity crisis and conflicts with the solidarity of interests."

Mr. Severin stated that the OSCE's involvement in the region is based on the realization that there is a "strong and inseparable link and interaction between the promotion of peace and stability, the development of economic prosperity, and the implementation of democracy, human rights and the rule of law." Mr. Severin argued that what South-East Europe needs is integration of values and integration of economies, which means developing infrastructure and furthering economic co-operation in the region.

Mr. Severin also made clear how pleased

he is that some of his prior fears regarding the isolation of Yugoslavia have not been realized, acknowledging Yugoslavia's return to the OSCE, which made both Yugoslavia and the OSCE stronger. He assured Yugoslavia that "they have our support and best wishes."

Turning to the worsening situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Severin made clear that "we must do our utmost to stop such acts of violence," asserting that peaceful means is the only way to solve disputes. In order to defend the territorial integrity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, it is essential to strengthen control of the borders, and non-military institutions to control the borders must be developed. Also, the entire KLA must be disarmed, and there must be measures to ensure an alternative civil life for former fighters. In the long-term, "it is essential to build up a just society where all members feel equal and safe."

Mr. Severin then assured Macedonia that the OSCE will continue to be at their disposal, and that the Chairman-in-Office has decided to appoint a personal representative to help solve the crisis.

Following his address to the second Conference of Parliaments of South-East Europe

President Severin paid his second visit to Kosovo from 21-22 March 2001.

After extensive meetings with leading international officials and local political representatives including the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Daan Everts and the Principal Deputy of the UN Special Representative, Ambassador Gary Matthews, as well as Dr. Ibrahim Rugova of the LDK and Hashim Thaqi of the PDK, Severin visited the Serb enclave of Gracanica as well as Mitrovica and also met with the presidents of a number of Municipal Assemblies.

After his 4-day visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and to Kosovo President Severin, made a statement in which he said: *"As long as the political and democratic process is in place and the international community is present [in South-East Europe] there are no excuses for violence....I urge all sectors of the Macedonian society to co-operate peacefully and to pursue constructive dialogue to build inter-ethnic confidence."*

The full press release on President Severin's statement is available on the OSCE PA website at: www.osce.org/pa

OSCE PA Delegates Address Preparatory Seminar for OSCE Economic Forum

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was represented at the Third Preparatory Seminar for the Ninth OSCE Economic Forum in Bucharest on 27-28 March by President Adrian Severin and Mr. Jerzy Osiatynski - Head of the Polish Delegation to the PA.

Mr. Osiatynski was a lead speaker in the working group dealing with the dangers of weak institutions. In his presentation he outlined that economic transition offers ample opportunities for the abuse of public office for private gain and for the 'capture of the State'. Weak institutions, in sum, breed corruption while undermining Governments' abilities to enact and implement policies in areas where government intervention is needed Mr. Osiatynski emphasized.

In his address to the Final Plenary Session President Severin expressed the need for transparency and good governance in economic matters, as emphasized by the Assembly in its 2000 Bucharest Declaration. Mr. Severin recommended that the OSCE Economic Forum, to be held in Prague next May, pay special attention to the importance of developing small and medium size enterprises in transitional economies. In particular, he referred to the need to study and analyse the ways and means, both institutional and political, by which OSCE participating States may create incentives for cross-border establishment of small and medium size enterprises.

Preparations for the 10th Annual Session in Paris continue....

From 3-5 April 2001, President Severin and Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev will travel to Paris in order to finalize preparations for the 10th Annual Session, 6-10 July 2001 and sign the Host Agreement with the National Assembly. During the visit President Severin will also have meetings with the Speaker of National Assembly Mr. Raymond Forni, the French Delegation to the OSCE PA and the Head of the French Delegation Mr. Michel Voisin.

The International Secretariat would like to remind Delegations who have not yet booked hotel rooms that the deadline is 7 April 2001.

Election Update: Montenegro

The OSCE PA will monitor the Parliamentary Elections in Montenegro on 22 April 2001. The Deadline for registering with the International Secretariat is: 9 April 2001.

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