

News from Copenhagen

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Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

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More than 240 Parliamentarians to attend Vienna Winter Meeting

From 21-22 February 2002, more than 240 parliamentarians from 50 OSCE participating States will meet in the OSCE premises in Vienna for the first OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting. The President of Austria, Dr. Thomas Klestil will address the Delegates during the opening meeting of the Assembly General Committees on 21 February. The opening session will also be addressed by the Portuguese Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Jaime Gama.

During the Winter Meeting the three General Committees will be briefed on current OSCE developments by senior representatives from the OSCE Governmental dimension including the Chair of the Permanent Council Ambassador Pimentel, the Chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation, Ambassador Vacek, Director of the Office for Democratic

Institutions and Human Rights, Ambassador Stoudmann, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Duve, the Deputy Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Baltes and the Head of the OSCE Centre in Tashkent, Ambassador Gantchev.

During the closing session on 22 February, Delegates will hear a presentation by OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Kubis and concluding remarks by the Chairs of the Committees and by President Severin.

The OSCE PA Winter Meeting is the second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar, only topped by the Annual Session held each year in July. This summer, Berlin will host the 11th Annual Session, from 6-10 July. In 2003 the Annual Session will take place in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

C-i-O Meets US Delegation

On 6 February 2002 in Washington a meeting took place between Senator Ben Nighthorse-Campbell and Congressman Steny Hoyer of the US Delegation and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Jaime Gama. During the meeting a great variety of OSCE developments was discussed as well as the position and role of the Parliamentary Assembly within the OSCE. Mr. Gama emphasized the importance of the Parliamentary dimension of the OSCE. When discussing the relationship between the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Governmental side, the Chairman-in-Office and Mr. Hoyer agreed that the appropriate relationship of the Parliamentary Assembly is at the political level, with Ministers and other political leaders. The C-i-O cited President Severin's participation in the Troika as an example of Parliamentary Assembly's political level involvement. They also discussed the planned retreat in Salzburg between OSCE Officials from Vienna and leaders of the OSCE Parliamentary dimension.

Vice-President Ahmet Tan Emphasizes Assembly Role in Combating Terrorism

From 7-8 February 2002, Vice-President Ahmet Tan and spoke at the "Conference of the European Union Parliaments Against Money Laundering". In his speech to the Conference Mr. Tan stated that "*the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is another major forum for co-operation on combating money laundering and terrorism. An important meeting on terrorism and its financial sources will be held in Vienna from 21-22 February, while the next annual meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly, which will take place in Berlin in July, will focus on terrorism with all its sources.*"

Parliamentary Training Project in Albania

On 20 December 2001, two members of the OSCE Presence in Albania visited the International Secretariat to discuss OSCE PA participation in a long-term assistance project entitled: "Modernizing the Capacity of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania". The project, which has been approved by the Albanian Parliament and will be financed by the Dutch Government, aims to enhance the capacity of deputies and parliamentary staff to carry out their roles and responsibilities as the representational body for Albanian citizens. This role has hitherto been limited by the concentration of the legal and technical expertise in the Government, leaving MPs without the necessary resources to contend with increasingly complex legislation or to oversee the Governments activities.

The project will be focused on three main areas: 1) A long-term training programme for MPs and their staff, including the creation of a permanent training capacity within Parliament. 2) The creation of a research and advisory unit to support the work of MPs and the parliamentary commissions. 3) Support for outreach activities to promote greater awareness amongst the public of the role of parliamentarians and greater responsibility to the electorate on the part of MPs. To achieve this the project foresees utilizing the expertise of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the World Bank Institute, as well as national parliaments.

Meeting with Swiss PA Delegation

From 24-25 January 2002, President Severin met in Switzerland with Mrs. Barbara Haering, Head of the Swiss Delegation and Rapporteur of the 2nd General Committees well as with other members of the Swiss Delegation.

In his meetings Mr. Severin emphasized the Trans-atlantic and Eurasian dimension of the Organization as well as the need for the OSCE to be a main actor in the European Security Architecture.

Mr. Severin also met with the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Anders Johnson.

At the conclusion of the visit Mr. Severin delivered a speech at the University of Fribourg on "Stability and provocations of multi-cultural public-spiritedness in Europe,"