

News from Copenhagen

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Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

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Parliamentary Field Visit to Azerbaijan

From 6-9 November 2002, an OSCE PA Delegation, including fourteen Members of Parliament representing eleven countries, paid a visit to the OSCE Office in Baku, Azerbaijan. Mrs. Tone Tingsgaard, of Sweden led the Delegation. The purpose of the visit was for Members of the OSCE PA to get acquainted with the work of the OSCE Office in Baku as well as to learn more about the situation in the country.

During the visit to Baku, the OSCE PA Delegation was briefed extensively about the mandate and work of the OSCE Office by the Head of the OSCE Office, Ambassador Peter Burkhard, his Deputy, Mr. Robin Seaward, and members of the staff.

The Delegation also met with the Speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament, representatives of the Azerbaijani Delegation to the OSCE PA, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, representatives of international organisations, opposition parties, local NGOs and media representatives.

This visit was the seventh of its kind. OSCE parliamentarians have previously visited OSCE field activities in Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Georgia. From 1-3 December, an OSCE PA Delegation will visit the OSCE Mission in Kyrgyzstan. The deadline for registering for this visit is 22 November 2002.

Meeting with Co-chairs of the Minsk Group

In Vienna, on 14 November, Mr. Göran Lennmarker, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative on Nagorno Karabakh had consultations with the Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group as well as the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office in the Conflict Dealt With by the OSCE Minsk Group. Mr. Lennmarker, MP (Sweden) was accompanied by Ambassador Vargö and Mr. Hörberg from the Swedish Parliament and Programme Officer Tina Schön from the International Secretariat

Public Affairs Round Table

From 12-13 November 2002 OSCE PA Counsellor Jan Jooren participated in the 8th OSCE Public Affairs Round Table in Vienna. The Round Table brings together Spokespersons and Media Focal Points from all OSCE Institutions and Missions in order to improve co-ordination and discuss ways to promote the OSCE. The Round Table focussed on practical issues involving co-operation between the OSCE Public and Public Information Section and Institutions/Missions. Presentations included an explanation by Ms. Stella Ronner of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding publicity aspects of the Dutch Chairmanship's plans for 2003.

Heads of Mission Meeting

On 11-12 November Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen and Programme Officer Alexander Staun-Rechnitzer participated in the South Eastern Europe Regional Heads of Mission Meeting in Skopje. Representatives from the OSCE field missions in the region, the OSCE Secretariat and OSCE Institutions discussed recent political events in the region, including elections and efforts to improve regional co-operation on return issues. OSCE initiatives in the fields of politico-military aspects of security, border security and counter terrorism were also discussed. Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen informed delegates of current OSCE Parliamentary Assembly activities and of upcoming field visits to the region.

Bruce George Visits Greece

OSCE PA President Bruce George paid an official visit to Greece on 12 and 13 November. The visit was hosted by the Head of the Greek Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Joseph Valyrakis and the Vice-chairman of the Assembly's General Committee on Political Affairs and Security Mr. Panayiotis Kammenos. During his visit President George held meetings with the Greek Delegation to the Assembly and with other parliamentary and governmental leaders, including the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Apostolos Kaklamanis; the Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tassos Giannitsis; and the leader of the New Democracy Party, Mr. Konstantinos Karamanlis.

During the meetings President George discussed current issues affecting the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in view of the upcoming Porto Ministerial. Special attention was also given to the Organization's Mediterranean dimension and to the fight against terrorism.

President George was accompanied by Gustavo Pallarés, Adviser to the President at the International Secretariat.

Belarus

On 13 November, Ms. Uta Zapf (MP, Germany), Chair of the OSCE PA Working Group on Belarus, travelled to Brussels to take part in an EU co-ordination meeting (COSCE). Ms. Zapf was invited to the meeting to share her views on the situation in Belarus, to discuss the activities of the Working Group, and to comment on the prospects for a resolution to Belarus' lack of representation in the OSCE PA. The meeting was attended by government officials responsible for OSCE policy from the EU capitals as well as by several OSCE Ambassadors from Vienna. Ms. Zapf was accompanied by Programme Officer Paul LeGendre.