

President Bruce George to lead OSCE Observation of Russian Elections

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, Bruce George, will arrive in Moscow next week to lead the OSCE Observers for the Parliamentary Elections in Russia, which will take place on Sunday 7 December 2003.

Mr. George will act as the Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, leading the Mission and delivering the preliminary post-election statement on Monday 8 December, in conjunction with other official election observers. The OSCE Observation Mission will assess the conduct of the elections, the political campaign and the role of the media.

The OSCE PA Observer Team includes more than 80 OSCE Parliamentarians from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, the FYR of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United States of America, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Prior to election day, the parliamentarians will attend an extensive briefing programme organized by the International Secretariat of the Assembly in close co-operation with the Russian State Duma. The parliamentarians will meet with

the incumbent Chairman of the State Duma, the Chairman of the Central Election Commission, leaders of the main political parties, representatives of the mass media, observers and experts.

On election day, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly expects to deploy observer teams to several areas, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Kazan and Voronezh.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has traditionally conducted a particularly active programme of election monitoring. Since the Russian parliamentary elections of 1993, hundreds of Parliamentarians have been deployed to over fifty elections in the OSCE area.

The OSCE Election Observation Mission to Russia is a joint effort between the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Since the 1997 Co-operation Agreement between the Chairman-in-Office and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, all OSCE observation missions in which the PA has participated have been led by an OSCE Parliamentarian. The OSCE PA is also working in close co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The Assembly comments on the OSCE Budget

OSCE PA President Bruce George has sent a letter to the Chairman-in-Office and Secretary General of the OSCE on the organization's proposed budget for 2004.

In his letter, the President suggests that a number of recommendations of the Assembly, which were presented at the Annual Session in Rotterdam, be taken into account in next year's budget. These suggestions include the adjustment of the regional distribution of resources, pointing out the importance of such areas as Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The President also emphasized that adequate resources are needed for increased attention to combat trafficking in human beings, to develop police capabilities and effective border controls, as well as to strengthen the economic dimension of the OSCE.

The President also advised that more resources are needed to work effectively towards gender equality and for fighting xenophobia and anti-semitism. He also recalled the Assembly's support for strengthening the resources of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

The President thanked the drafters of the budget for their excellent work and recognized some improvements in the presentation of the budget. At the same time, he made suggestions for further improvement.

The Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Jan Kubis, introduced the draft budget to the Standing Committee in Rome. Before sending his letter, the President asked for the opinion of all National Delegations and consulted Members of the Bureau.

(The whole text of the letter is available at the Secretariat)



Göran Lenmarker (MP, Sweden), the PA Special Rep. on Nagorno Karabakh, attended the Permanent Council on 13 November to hear the Minsk Group report.

OSCE PA to observe Presidential Elections in Georgia

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will send an election observation mission to monitor the upcoming presidential elections on 4 January 2004. Members, who are interested in participating in this mission, are kindly requested to notify the International Secretariat no later than Monday, 15 December 2003. For more information, please contact Programme Officer Tina Schoen.