

# News from Copenhagen

## Bruce George Leads OSCE Observation of State Duma Elections

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December in Moscow, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Bruce George, acting as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, delivered the preliminary post-election statement on the 7 December 2003 State Duma Elections, in conjunction with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The joint statement concluded that the elections were well organized, but failed to meet many international standards, stating that “the pre-election process was characterized by extensive use of the state apparatus and media favoritism to benefit the largest pro-presidential party, resulting in voter apathy.”

President George said that the fact that the elections were technically well-organized made it “even more regrettable that the main impression of the overall electoral process is of regression in the democratization process in Russia.”

OSCE PA Vice Presidents Tone Tingsgaard (Sweden), Alcee Hastings (United States), Ihor Ostash (Ukraine) and Nevzat Yalcintas (Turkey), joined the OSCE PA Observer Team of more than 80 OSCE Parliamentarians from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, 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 of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the Nordic Council attended



PA President George and PA Vice-President Yalcintas examine voter lists at the opening of a polling station in the early morning of election day.

an extensive briefing programme organized by the International Secretariat of the Assembly in close co-operation with the Russian State Duma.

The Parliamentarians heard from leaders of the main political parties, representatives of the mass media, observers and experts.

On election day, parliamentary observer teams were deployed to several areas, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Kazan and Voronezh.

