

OSCE PA Leadership calls for united fight against anti-Semitism

A Delegation of more than 30 parliamentarians from 15 OSCE participating States represented the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the Second OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism, held in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004. The Delegation included OSCE PA Vice-Presidents Barbara Haering, Alcee Hastings and Gert Weisskirchen as well as



Treasurer Jerry Grafstein. In her address Barbara Haering emphasized that the maintenance of a pluralistic society is essential for the fight against anti-Semitism. She pointed to the PA's efforts to meet the challenges of anti-Semitism and racism in recent years. Its resolutions call for pro-active and joint action by all participants. In Haering's view, governments and parliaments have the responsibility to immediately condemn any anti-Semitic statements or actions. They should not wait until the media does so.

One of the moderators of the conference, PA Vice-President Gert Weisskirchen, stressed the significance of choosing Berlin as the place for the conference. "Just a few hundred meters from here", he reminded the audience in the building of the German Foreign Office, "Hitler invented the holocaust. Governments and parliaments have to stand up and fight anti-Semitism." Weisskirchen is convinced that this fight will be won because democracy is stronger than hate. For OSCE PA Vice-President Alcee Hastings, the same ignorance that is passed along from generation to generation in families is "running

rampant" in daily media. "Whether appearing in a government owned or regulated market, or privately funded media, anti-Semitic comments, cartoons, and articles continue to flourish despite mainstream society's rejection of anti-Semitism." He called for specific goals with real timetables and tools of measurement in order to embark on the critical task of curbing anti-Semitism.

OSCE PA Treasurer Jerry Grafstein said that "we must transplant the antique thought process of anti-Semitism with this "Berlin Process" where parliaments, composed of all parties, and all governments, unite with their peoples, in one voice, and say enough is enough". Senator Grafstein proposed a follow up plan that could be labeled "The Four Mores":

- 1) "More statistics: we must keep track, State by State, region by region, of the anti-Semitic incidents;
- 2) More law enforcement: we need more specialized law enforcement directed towards the complex matter of prosecuting hate incidents;
- 3) More education: we need more and

specialized public and private education at all levels. Hate is a learned experience;

4) More restraint in the media: It is clear that the media must become aware that it has a special role to play ensuring that its message is not tainted with hate or incitement to violence".

Together with around 800 delegates, the parliamentarians agreed on the "Berlin Declaration", which sets out concrete measures to fight anti-Semitism. The OSCE's Participating States agreed to assemble reliable information and statistics about anti-Semitic crimes, as well as other hate crimes. ODIHR will gather and report these findings and make them public. Furthermore, the declaration contains other concrete measures such as reviewing legal systems to ensure they foster a safe environment free of Anti-Semitic harassment, violence or discrimination and calls for educational programmes to combat anti-Semitism and promote remembrance of the Holocaust.



Senior officials prepare parliamentary cooperation on the Stability Pact

Officials from several interparliamentary and other institutions met in Strasbourg on 29 April 2004 to discuss parliamentary cooperation on the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The OSCE PA was represented by Pentti Väänänen, Deputy Secretary General. Other institutions present included the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, European Parliament, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, International Institute for Democracy, East-West Parliamentary Practice Project, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and National Democratic Institute. The meeting was chaired by Jean-Daniel Biéler, Director of the First Working Table of the Stability Pact.

In the meeting Pentti Väänänen introduced plans to hold a Parliamentary Conference on the Stability Pact in November. The Conference will take place in Sofia and will be co-hosted by the OSCE PA and the Bulgarian Parliament. The Conference will be devoted to the fight against organized crime and corruption.

Petra Bläss, former Deputy Speaker of the German Bundestag, introduced her report on parliamentary cooperation in South Eastern Europe within the framework of the Stability Pact.

EDINBURGH SESSION JULY 2004

DEADLINES FOR PRESENTING AMENDMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

1. Amendments to the draft resolutions presented by the Rapporteurs (signed by 5 members representing at least 2 countries) must be received at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen not later than on Monday, 21 June 2004. (Rule 21.1)
2. Supplementary items (signed by 20 members representing at least 4 countries) must be received at the International Secretariat not later than Monday, 14 June 2004. (Rule 20.1)
3. Amendments to the Supplementary items (signed by 5 members representing at least 2 countries) must be received at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen not later than on Monday 28 June 2004. (Rule 21.1)