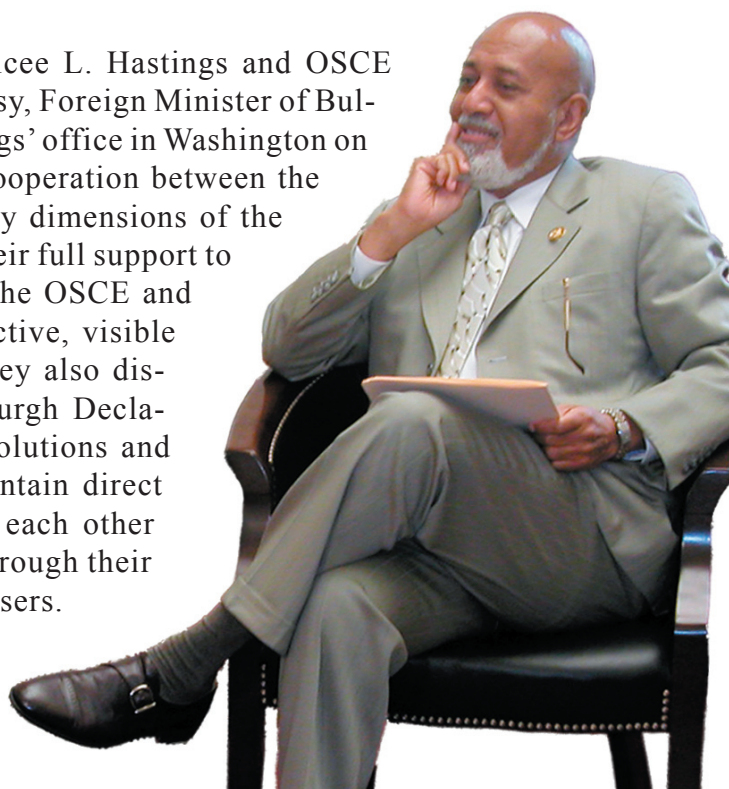


PA President Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman-in-Office Solomon Passy pledge to work together for the OSCE

Newly elected PA President Alcee L. Hastings and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Solomon Passy, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, met in Congressman Hastings' office in Washington on Wednesday 21 July to discuss cooperation between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE. Both leaders pledged their full support to ongoing efforts to reform the OSCE and to make it more effective, visible and transparent. They also discussed the Edinburgh Declaration and Resolutions and agreed to maintain direct contact with each other as well as through their senior advisers.



Edinburgh Statement on Belarus

During the course of the OSCE PA's Annual Session in Edinburgh, the OSCE PA Working Group on Belarus held intense and at times difficult discussions with the Belarusian Delegation to the OSCE PA, which resulted in a Joint Statement. In this Statement, parliamentarians from the Working Group on Belarus and the Belarusian Delegation to the OSCE PA declared their intention "to contribute to making the forthcoming parliamentary elections in the Republic of Belarus meet OSCE standards for free and fair elections." The parliamentarians refer to the recommendations which resulted from the ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission

and expect these recommendations to be observed. They stress the importance of fair access for all candidates to the media, balanced coverage of the election campaign in the State media and political diversity in the electoral commissions on all levels. They stress that all candidates should be able to engage in their election campaigns freely. Uta Zapf, the Chair of the Working Group on Belarus, recognised that a significant step was taken by the Belarusian Delegation in supporting these recommendations. As a result, she withdrew her draft resolution which was to be discussed in the context of the Assembly's Annual Session.

"I believe that the OSCE is in need of transformation. Moreover, I think that the transformation process should start right away. I am a politician like all of you here and I am convinced that we should try to humanize the Organization and bring it closer to the people and our constituencies, thereby better responding to their needs and expectations. I have the strong feeling that the OSCE is embedded in a sort of bureaucratic status quo which should be addressed with vision and political leadership....."

....The transformation process requires the input of parliamentarians and foreign ministries, the interest of the press, and the awareness of the public. You, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, play a vital role in generating fresh initiatives and influencing decision-takers to use the OSCE to tackle contemporary challenges and to transform it to be better equipped in the future".

(OSCE Chairman-in-Office Solomon Passy addressing the Annual Session in Edinburgh)

Upcoming Events

Rhodes, Greece: Standing Committee Meeting and OSCE PA Conference on Trafficking in Human Beings and Mediterranean Forum, 29 September – 2 October 2004.

OSCE PA Election Monitoring

Kazakhstan, 19 September
Belarus 17 October

Kosovo Assembly, 23 October
Ukraine, 31 October