

OSCE PA and Swiss Foundation for World Affairs engage experts to discuss future of the OSCE

OSCE PA President Alcee L. Hastings has initiated a joint project with the Swiss Foundation for World Affairs to examine the future of the OSCE in parallel with the OSCE Eminent Persons Group. A small group of distinguished experts, politicians and diplomats with experience in foreign policy or CSCE/OSCE affairs have been invited to participate and submit written contributions. A colloquium will be held in June for in-depth discussions on the main problems facing the OSCE today, and to consider recommendations and proposals for how to proceed in the future.

The Swiss Foundation for World Affairs, which is based at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, is chaired by Ambassador Edouard Brunner, one of Switzerland's most distinguished and celebrated diplomats and an acknowledged expert on the CSCE/OSCE, having served as one of the negotiators of the Helsinki Final Act.

Ambassador Brunner and President Hastings will chair the joint OSCE PA – Swiss Foundation colloquium.

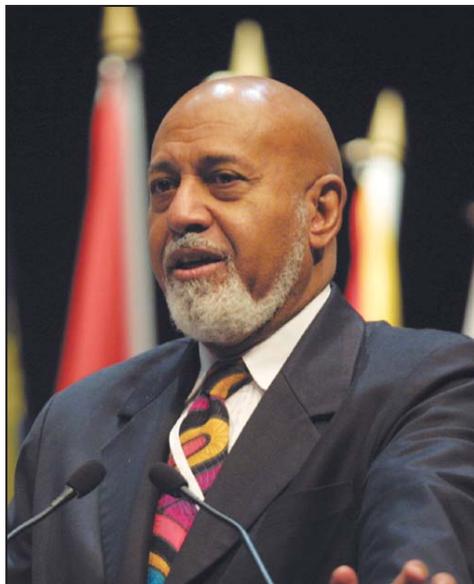
The papers and discussions will be summarized and analyzed, identifying ideas and opinions that appear to have substantial support among the group. An interim report will be sent to the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability, chaired by U.S. Congressman Steny Hoyer, and will be made available at the Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Washington, D.C. in July. The Ad Hoc Committee on Transpar-

ency and Accountability will review the recommendations and report to the Assembly. A second colloquium may also be held in the Autumn prior to the OSCE PA Autumn Conference in Serbia and Montenegro in October.

As emphasized by several speakers during recent OSCE PA meetings, the OSCE is facing a number of difficult problems, including the failure to reach a decision on a budget for this year and to appoint a new Secretary General. Many experts describe the current situation as a crisis for the Organization.

In accordance with the Ministerial Council Decision from Sofia in December, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dr. Dimitrij Rupel, appointed a Panel of Eminent Persons to assess the situation and make recommendations by the end of June. During the OSCE PA Winter Meeting in February, Minister Rupel suggested that the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE engage in a similar exercise. President Hastings expressed his confidence that the joint project with the Swiss Foundation will contribute to the efforts to overcome some of the problems and deadlocks in the OSCE. At the Expanded Bureau meeting in Copenhagen in April, he reiterated his hope and expectation that the problems faced by the OSCE would be resolved in a timely manner. He further reminded Members of the Expanded Bureau that the Parliamentary Assembly is an independent OSCE structure, not directly affected by the crisis in Vienna, that continues to function efficiently to carry out its main task, to bring parliamentarians together to talk to each other.

Hastings and Tingsgård organize discussion on Gender Issues



In conjunction with the upcoming Annual Session in Washington in July, President Alcee L. Hastings and Vice-President Tone Tingsgård, who also serves as Special Representative on Gender Issues, will host a working breakfast on 1 July at 8:00 to discuss gender issues and the gender-related situation within the OSCE. Beatrix Colijn, Senior Adviser on Gender Issues in the OSCE Secretariat will also inform Members on developments within the Organization. The working breakfast will give Members an opportunity to prepare for the debate on gender issues which will take place in the Assembly plenary meeting later the same day, when Ms. Tingsgård presents her report.

