

# News from Copenhagen

## Standing Committee Meets in Sveti-Stefan



In conjunction with the Autumn Meetings in Sveti-Stefan, Montenegro, the Standing Committee of Heads of OSCE PA Delegations met on October 8, 2005.

President Alcee L. Hastings gave a brief report on his activities since the last meeting of the Standing Committee, in Washington in July. He reported on his high-level official visits to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as his participation in events such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, held at the United Nations in New York. Congressman Hastings also briefed the Committee about his address to the OSCE Permanent Council on October 4, where he gave an overview of the Assembly's recent activities, and particularly reiterated recommendations from the Washington Declaration on the need for reforming the decision-making mechanisms of the OSCE to effectively face new threats and challenges.

The Treasurer of the Assembly, Canadian Senator Jerry Grafstein, reported that the Assembly's fiscal year had ended on September 30, and that the International Secretariat continues to run well within budget. He applauded the efficient work of the Secretariat, and particularly commended Programme Officer Paul LeGendre, who will be leaving the Secretariat after five years of dedicated service. Secretary General Spencer Oliver also reported to the Standing Committee on the work of the International Secretariat, highlighting the *News from Copenhagen* as a useful tool for keeping informed about the activities of the President, Members, and the Secretariat.

The Standing Committee also heard reports on election observation activities and on the work of Assembly Ad Hoc Committees on Moldova, Belarus, Abkhazia and on Transparency and Accountability in the OSCE. The Special Representatives on Gender Issues and on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict also reported to the Standing Committee.

A report was also given on the work of the Rules Sub-Committee, which met on October 7.

In accordance with past practice, the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, addressed the Standing Committee and briefed the Members on the draft 2006 OSCE budget. The Secretary General gave an overview of spending in the OSCE, including work in the field activities and at the headquarters level. Ambassador de Brichambaut then answered questions on the draft budget from the gathered parliamentarians, including issues dealing with implementation of reform of the OSCE, the scale of contributions and outreach programmes by the organization.

The Heads of Delegations also discussed upcoming meetings of the Assembly, and considered proposals for the theme of the 15th Annual Session, to be held in Brussels in July 2006.

### Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure

On 7 October, the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure was convened by Mr. Pieter De Crem, Chairman of the Sub-Committee. In accordance with its mandate, the Sub-Committee continued discussions begun in Washington in July based on recommendations put forward by delegations to the OSCE PA. A thorough discussion was held on a range of proposals regarding ways of improving the work of the Assembly.

The Sub-Committee will meet again early in the new year in Brussels to finalize proposals, which will be submitted to the Standing Committee for approval during the Winter Meeting in Vienna, 23-24 February 2006. An overall review of the Rules of Procedure is standard practice, and has traditionally been conducted every few years by the Assembly.