

Assembly leadership prepares for Brussels Session



President Hastings reports to the Expanded Bureau (left). Vice-President Tone Tingsgård draws a lot to determine the Assembly's seating order (right).



In preparation for the Assembly's 15th Annual Session, the Expanded Bureau of the Assembly met in Copenhagen on 24 April. Chaired by OSCE PA President Alcee L. Hastings, the meeting brought together the PA's Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Officers of the three General Committees to discuss Assembly activities and to prepare for upcoming events.

The Members were welcomed to Copenhagen by Kristian Pihl Lorentzen, Head of the Danish Delegation, who stressed the importance of the OSCE PA's work. In particular, Mr. Lorentzen remarked on the importance and relevance of the PA's election observation programme. President Hastings reported on his recent activities, including on his official visits to Spain and to Portugal, and on his leadership of the OSCE election observation missions to Belarus and Ukraine.

Following the President's report, Members discussed the election activities of the Assembly, and its co-operation with other institutions.

The Expanded Bureau was also briefed by the Rapporteurs of the General Committees on their draft reports and resolutions, which they are preparing for the Annual Session. The Members applauded the excellent work of all of the Rapporteurs, and provided input on the draft reports. The Rapporteurs will now finalize their drafts, which will be distributed to all OSCE PA delegations in due time.

The Assembly Treasurer, Jerry Grafstein, reported to the Expanded Bureau that the International Secretariat continues to function well within budget, and that the independent auditors remain fully satisfied with the financial running of the Secretariat. Senator Grafstein also presented his proposed budget, to be approved during the Annual Session in Brussels, for the next fiscal year. He indicated that there would be an increase of approximately 8% primarily due to

the expansion and strengthening of the PA Liaison Office in Vienna.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported on the work of the International Secretariat in supporting the activities of the President, Special Representatives, Ad Hoc Committees and Assembly Members. Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev also informed the Expanded Bureau about preparations for the Brussels Session, to be held from 3 to 7 July, and reported that preparations are proceeding very well.

Vice-President Tone Tingsgård reported on the recent trip to Georgia by the Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia (Georgia), and on the side-event that she had organized as Special Representative on Gender Issues during the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Upon the invitation of the President, Vice-President Tone Tingsgård drew a lot to determine the Assembly's seating order for the coming year.



In conjunction with the Expanded Bureau, the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure met on April 23 at the International Secretariat.