

OSCE PA Presidential visit to Afghanistan

OSCE PA President Goran Lennmarker visited Kabul, Afghanistan 12-14 June. The situation in Afghanistan was discussed in meetings with parliamentarians and leading UN and EU officials.

In particular, the discussions focused on the importance of democratic institution building and reconciliation within Afghanistan as well as security and development issues.

Mr. Lennmarker informed about the OSCE's and the Assembly's priorities of Central Asia and the upcoming OSCE PA Annual Session in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Meetings between parliamentarians is an important part of people-to-people contacts, emphasized the Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Senate, Hamed Gailani, in one of the meetings Mr Lennmarker had with Afghan parliamentarians, including several female members. Education was highlighted as a crucial element in the rebuilding of the country.

The meetings in Kabul were arranged in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which works on a project to strengthen the National Assembly (Support an Effective Afghan Legislature; SEAL).

President Lennmarker recently also visited Cyprus. The discussions during the 27 to 29 May visit centered on the preparations for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session in Astana and on OSCE PA's activities and engagement in the Mediterranean area. In particular, the discussions focused

on the role and participation of the Mediterranean Partner States, such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Israel.

The talks in Cyprus also touched upon the internal Cypriot political situation, in particular the Cyprus conflict, and Mr. Lennmarker took the opportunity during his visit to take a walk through the recently opened passage of the Green Line at Ledra Street.

President Lennmarker met with a wide range of Cypriot representatives during his visit, including President Dimitris Christofias; the Speaker of Parliament Marios Garoyian; the President of the Northern Cypriots, Mehmet Ali Talat; as well as with Stavros Evagorou, Athina Kyriadou, and Eleni Theocharous, all members of the Cypriot delegation to the OSCE PA.



President Goran Lennmarker



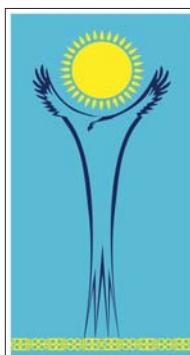
Stavros Evagorou, Head of Cypriot Delegation

17th Annual Session set to begin in Kazakhstan

Almost 300 parliamentarians from most of the 56 OSCE states are set to gather for the OSCE PA's 17th Annual Session, to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan from 29 June to 3 July. "Transparency in the OSCE" is the Session's main theme, while other key issues to be debated include water management, trade, combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children, cyber security and migration. A series of regional issues will also be discussed, such as Afghanistan and Georgia. Other issues on the agenda include election observation and combating violence against women.

The Annual Session will adopt a final document, called the Astana Declaration, which will include recommendations on these and related issues.

The speakers at the Session include OSCE PA President



17th Annual Session
ASTANA, 29 June - 03 July 2008



Goran Lennmarker, Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan; Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Speaker of the Senate of the Kazakh Parliament; Aslan Mussin, Speaker of the Mazhilis of

the Kazakh Parliament; Alexander Stubb, Foreign Minister of Finland, and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE; Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, OSCE Secretary General; and Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Elections will be held for new Assembly officers, including a

new President of the Assembly as President Lennmarker has completed the maximum two one-year terms. The Annual Session will take place at the "Radisson SAS" hotel in Astana. All documents, resolutions and general information on the OSCE PA can be found at www.oscepa.org. Delegations should take note that all deadlines have passed for amendments and Supplementary Items.