

# News from Copenhagen

## Parliamentarians call for greater transparency in the OSCE

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly concluded the 17th Annual Session on 3 July by adopting the Astana Declaration, as well as additional Resolutions. The culmination of five days of deliberation by 227 Members of Parliament, the Declaration calls on participating States to increase transparency both within the OSCE and the national governments of OSCE participating States.

The OSCE PA adopted a Resolution calling on the governments of the 56 participating States to “fully commit themselves, at the highest political levels, to the full implementation of all of their OSCE commitments and to future strengthening of the Organization.” To do so, governments should make use of the Assembly as “a key element in the Organization’s efforts to be credible in promoting democracy.” The Resolution “requests the Permanent Council to regularly discuss and take into consideration the initiatives taken by the Parliamentary Assembly.” It also cites the need for the OSCE to “carry on further reform aiming at reducing the democratic deficit (and) strengthening transparency and accountability.”

The Declaration calls for more transparency in the organization of, and access to, political and historical archives. It also urges participating States to increase transparency in the use of private military contractors and to ensure that these contractors operate under international law.

The OSCE PA implored all States to sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocol and take concrete steps to address the threat of global climate change. The Declaration, however, recognizes that the



environmental threat is not confined to global warming, and hence calls on participating States to undertake better waste management, draw up plans for co-ordination in the event of nuclear accident, and set up early warning networks for natural disasters.

Following a vigorous debate, the PA also adopted a Resolution on Afghanistan calling on States to meet their commitments in respect to international contributions and donor pledges. The Assembly also expressed its support for the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking in that country.

Representing the collective voice of OSCE parliamentarians, the Astana Declaration and Resolutions will now be shared with all governments of the 56 OSCE participating States. The document is available in French, Russian and English at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org).

## Soares elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly



On 3 July, the OSCE PA elected Joao Soares of Portugal as the new President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, succeeding Goran Lennmarker of Sweden.

Mr. Soares has been involved in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since 2002, both as deputy head and, presently, as head of the Portuguese delegation. He has been a Vice-President of OSCE PA and a member of the Assembly’s Bureau since July 2006.

“I strongly believe in the OSCE and its parliamentary

dimension,” said Joao Soares after being unanimously elected. “The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has a pivotal role in the future of the whole Organization: promoting the dialogue between all participating States in an inclusive manner, ensuring the respect for the OSCE founding principles and acting towards the resolution of all forms of conflicts. This should be our task, to continue the work that was so bravely started in 1975.”

A veteran election observer, Mr. Soares most recently led the OSCE PA’s observation mission for the parliamentary elections in Georgia, where he was appointed to deliver the assessment on behalf of the OSCE by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

Mr. Soares has been a member of the Portuguese parliament from 1987 to 1990 and again since 2002, elected by the constituency of Lisbon. He is also a member of the Parliamentary Committee on National Defense. He served as mayor of Lisbon from 1995 to 2002, and as a member of the European Parliament from 1994 to 1995. He has a law degree and is a lawyer and editor. He is married with five children.