

# News from Copenhagen

## Picula represents OSCE PA at conflict resolution conference in Dublin

In Dublin on 27 April, OSCE PA Vice-President Tonino Picula represented the Assembly at the OSCE Chairmanship's Conference "Shared Future: Building and Sustaining Peace," which focused on Northern Ireland as a case study of an effectively resolved protracted conflict.

The conference was moderated by former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari with an opening address by the OSCE Chair-in-Office, Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Eamon Gilmore. It included a video message from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, as well as presentations by many of the key officials involved in the peace process, including former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, First Minister Peter Robinson and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Northern Ireland.

Many speakers stressed that although the the Good Friday Agreement was signed and overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of Ireland – both north and south of the border – its implementation was and still is the key challenge.

Deputy First Minister McGuinness compared the peace process to a bicycle which either keeps moving forward or falls. Presentations observed that Northern Ireland still faces the challenge of segregated population groups, especially in housing and education, which remains a stumbling block to the creation of a shared future for all.

Speakers noted the initial difficulties in convincing population groups to accept the compromise, but highlighted the current general acceptance that violence is unacceptable and counterproductive.

In his opening remarks, Gilmore explained that during the negotiations, ground rules were established reflecting shared



Martti Ahtisaari speaks with Tonino Picula on the margins of the Dublin conference.

understandings. One was that "nothing will be finally agreed on any of the tracks until everything was agreed in the negotiations as a whole," he said.

Another was that "talks would proceed on the basis of 'sufficient consensus' so that where unanimity was not possible; any decision would have to be able to command a clear majority in both communities in Northern Ireland," and that "ultimately it had to be built by the people and their elected representatives."

In addition to discussing the process leading to the peace agreement, special sessions were held on issues of justice and policing, respecting different traditions as well as the international dimension of conditions for peace. In the latter session, Vice-President Picula spoke about the Croatian experience, which had been influenced heavily first by prospects of EU membership and later by the accession talks and reforms.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen and Secretary of the Croatian Delegation to the OSCE PA Milovan Petkovic also participated in the conference. The PA's Irish Delegation was represented by Eoghan Murphy, Ann Phelan, Arthur Spring and Joanna Tuffy.

## SG Oliver records interview for OSCE archives



Oliver is given a tour of the archives by Alice Nemcova.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver recorded last week a four-hour interview about the history of the OSCE for an oral history project being produced by the OSCE Prague Office.

Alice Nemcova, the senior assistant for documentation and information

at the archive office in Prague, conducted the interview, which included Oliver's recollections from serving as deputy head of U.S. delegations to the 1977-78 CSCE Belgrade Review Meeting and the 1980-83 Madrid Review Meeting, as well as from his role in establishing the U.S. Helsinki Commission and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Oliver spoke about the U.S. delegation's decision at the

Belgrade meeting to name specific names and countries violating the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, a practice that became a hallmark of the Helsinki process to hold participating States accountable for their performance in observing the promises they made in Helsinki.

"I'm really glad the OSCE Prague Office is conducting these interviews with people who were present at some of the most pivotal moments in the history of the Helsinki process," Oliver said. "By getting these stories recorded now, we will help preserve the record of the OSCE so others may learn from its historic human rights and security work."

Among other interviews, the Prague Office has already recorded former Soviet Ambassador Yuri Dubinin, former Swiss diplomat Edouard Brunner, former Finnish diplomat Jaakko Itoniemi and former French Ambassador Jacques Andréani. Communications Director Neil Simon accompanied the secretary general on the visit.