

News from Copenhagen

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Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

19 February 2001

Third Committee Officers Meet in Berlin

The Bureau of the Third General Committee met in Berlin on 8-9 February 2001. The Bureau consists of the Officers of the Committee; Mr. Gert Weisskirchen (Germany) as Chair, Senator Dorota Somonides (Poland), as Vice-Chair and Ms. Elena Mizulina (Russia) as Rapporteur.

Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen attended the meeting on behalf of the Secretariat and Mr. Nikolai Mizulin attended as the adviser to the Rapporteur.

The Rapporteur, Ms. Mizulina, introduced her ideas about the report to be presented to the Tenth Annual Session of the OSCE PA in Paris in July 2001. The report will deal with the situation of national minorities in the OSCE participating States. The aim is to analyse and discuss the rights and responsibilities of national minorities and their relations to the State. A political resolution will be drafted on the basis of the report.

The Rapporteur was asked to inform the Standing Committee of other plans in Vienna on 22-23 February. A draft report will be presented to the Expanded Bureau of the OSCE PA in April. The Bureau of the Third General Committee agreed to meet on the eve of the Expanded Bureau to discuss the draft and its presentation.

The meeting also discussed the forthcoming meeting of the Prize Committee of the OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to be held in conjunction with the Expanded Bureau of the OSCE PA in April.

President Adrian Severin Visits Portugal

From 16-18 February 2001, President Severin paid an official visit to Portugal, since January 2001 a member of the OSCE Troika, at the invitation of Mr Antonio Reis, Head of the Portuguese Delegation to the OSCE PA. In addition to meetings with Mr Reis and the Portuguese Delegation Mr. Severin met with the President

of Portugal Jorge Sampaio, Prime Minister Antonio Guterres and Deputy Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament, Mr. Narana Coissoró. Mr. Severin also met the Secretary of State Luis Amado as well as with Ambassador João Rosa Lã who will lead the OSCE unit in the Foreign Ministry during the Portuguese Chairmanship next year.

During his meetings Mr. Severin emphasized that the Assembly is an essential OSCE Institution that brings added value to OSCE undertakings. President Severin also underlined the need for transparency in OSCE decision-making mechanisms as well as for better inter-Institutional co-ordination in the OSCE.

Credentials Committee on Belarus Meets in Vienna

The Credentials Committee on Belarus as appointed by President Severin, will meet on 22 February 2001 in Vienna to prepare recommendations for the Standing Committee on whether to accept the challenges of the representatives of the newly elected National Assembly of Belarus to the Delegation of the 13th

Supreme Soviet, the body currently recognized by the OSCE PA. The Credentials Committee is chaired by Mrs. Tone Tingsgård (Sweden) and includes Mr. Antonio Reis (Portugal) and Mrs. Geertje Lycklama a Nijeholt (Netherlands). In addition to the two delegations from Belarus, Ambassador

Hans-Georg Wieck, Head of the OSCE AMG, and Mr. Gert Weisskirchen, Member of the Ad hoc Working Group on Belarus will meet with the Credentials Committee and present their testimony. The Committee will present their recommendation to the Standing Committee on Thursday, February 22.



President Severin meets President of the Belgian Senate Armand de Decker during recent visit to Brussels.

New Presidential Advisor

Mr. Gustavo Pallares from Spain has joined the Copenhagen Secretariat as Presidential Advisor, a new post approved in the budget in Bucharest last year. He will be responsible for supporting and coordinating the activities of President Severin as well as undertaking other responsibilities in the Secretariat.

Mr. Pallares, who speaks French and English is a Political Science Graduate specialised in European and International Affairs. He has good experience in international parliamentary issues, having worked for the European Parliament and for the Spanish Parliament for four years as adviser to Mr. Javier Rupérez, Third President of the OSCE PA (1996 - 98), and also President of the NATO Assembly (1998 - 2000). He was one of the two first international interns to work at the OSCE PA Secretariat in 1995. Before joining the International Secretariat, Mr. Pallares was Executive Director of the Fundación Humanismo y Democracia in Madrid.

New Research Fellows

As of 1 February 2001 the following new Research Fellows have joined the International Secretariat:

Ms. Ffiona Kyte (United Kingdom)
Veronika Kotek (Switzerland)
Nathaniel Parry (USA)

Parliamentarians to Observe Elections in Moldova

36 parliamentarians from 15 OSCE participating States will observe the parliamentary elections in Moldova on Sunday 25 February 2001. The OSCE PA Observation Delegation will be headed by Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, who is also expected to act as the

Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. Prior to the elections the parliamentarians will be thoroughly briefed by the OSCE Mission to Moldova and by representatives of political parties as well as government officials. On

election day the parliamentarians will be deployed across the country to observe the voting process. During a press conference on Monday 26 February, Mr. Kiljunen will deliver the OSCE Preliminary Statement assessing the Elections.