

News from Copenhagen

Number 22

Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

27 February 2001

Winter Session Approved

At its meeting in Vienna 22-23 February 2001, the Standing Committee approved the holding of an annual OSCE PA Winter Session in Vienna, as part of a general revision of the Rules of Procedure. (Subject will be treated in the next *News from Copenhagen*.) Based on the winter meeting of the Standing Committee, the Winter Session will allow the three General Committees to have additional discussions and debates among themselves as well as to be briefed by high-level OSCE Officials who have responsibilities related to the competence of each of the three General Committees. The Session will increase the opportunity for dialogue between OSCE Parliamentarians as well as their familiarity with the ongoing work of the OSCE, without challenging the status of the Annual Session that remains the main event in the OSCE PA calendar.



OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mircea Dan Geoana addressing the Standing Committee

Preparations for the 10th Annual Session in Paris

The Head of the French Delegation to the OSCE PA, Mr. Michel Voisin, reported on the preparations for the upcoming Annual Session in Paris 6-10 July 2001. He informed the Standing Committee that preparations were advancing according to plan and expressed his confidence that at least the surroundings would do its part to make the next Annual Session as successful as the last one in Bucharest. Mr. Voisin added that both the French Parliament and Government were preparing to welcome the Assembly and urged all delegations to register their participation as early as possible as hotel accommodation is heavily booked during the summer period in Paris. In connection with Mr. Voisin's Report the President announced the theme for the Annual Session in Paris which will be "European Security and Conflict Prevention: Challenges to the OSCE in the 21st Century".

OSCE Officials Address Standing Committee

In his address to the Standing Committee the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister, Mircea Dan Geoana, drew attention to the important role played by the Assembly and stated:

"...[It is my] firm belief that the multi-faceted activity of the OSCE would not be complete without its parliamentary dimension...The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has developed into one of our most important Institutions, continuously providing new ideas and proposals for the promotion of democracy, prosperity and increased confidence within and between Participating States. It is an essential actor in our efforts to push the boundaries of democracy outwards."

Following his address the Chairman-in-Office took questions from the floor.

Heads of OSCE Institutions were also given the opportunity to address the Standing Committee. The OSCE High Commissioner Mr. Max van der Stoep, gave his last report to the Standing Committee in his capacity as High Commissioner and was thanked for his services to the OSCE by OSCE PA Vice-President, Steny Hoyer on behalf of the Assembly. Other OSCE Officials who reported to the Permanent Council included the Representative on Freedom of the Media Mr. Freimut Duve, the OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubiš as well as the OSCE Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator, Mr. Tom Price who also addressed the Assembly for the last time. At the proposal of the Georgian Delegation an ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia was approved by the Standing Committee.