

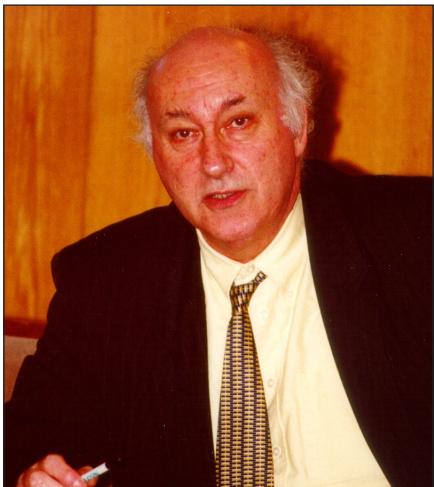
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Changes to the Rules of Procedure



Mr. Bruce George, Head of the Committee
on Rules of Procedure

During the Standing Committee Meeting in Vienna 22-23 February 2000, a number of changes to the Rules of Procedure were adopted. In addition to approving the Winter Session the Standing Committee agreed to move the deadline for submitting amendments to draft resolutions to at least fourteen days prior to the opening of the first plenary session. Supplementary items must now be presented to the International Secretariat no later than twenty-one days before the opening of the first plenary session and amendments to supplementary items must be presented at least seven days before the opening. The new Rules also offer the possibility of compromise amendments, which must be submitted no later than 6 pm on the day of the opening plenary session.

The right of members of the OSCE PA to submit written questions to the Chairperson-in-Office, other Members of the Ministerial Council and Heads of OSCE Institutions, was also approved by the Standing Committee. Each member of the Assembly is allowed to present three questions per year, which must be communicated through the President. The Rules of Procedure in all six official OSCE languages will be forwarded to Delegations as soon as possible. For further information please contact Deputy Secretary General Penti Väänänen.

The full text of the new Rules of Procedure in English is available on the OSCE PA website at:

www.osce.org/pa/docs/rules.pdf

Elections in Moldova Comply with International Standards

"These elections in Moldova consolidated a democratic trend that should continue. Unfortunately, people in Transnistria were not able to exercise their right to vote. The high voter turnout of 69 per cent indicates confidence in the democratic process" said Kimmo Kiljunen, head of the OSCE PA Delegation and Special

Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, during the press conference after the elections. The OSCE PA Delegation, which included thirty-five parliamentarians from fourteen OSCE participating States, concluded that the elections in general complied with international standards. The Delegation did however note some

shortcomings during the elections, including incomplete voter lists and excessively restrictive media provisions in the Electoral Code. The non-co-operation of the de-facto authorities in Transnistria meant that only a very small percentage of the Moldovan citizens in Transnistria managed to exercise their right to vote.

No Consensus on Belarus Parliamentary Representatives

The Belarus Credentials Committee met on the first day of the Standing Committee Meeting held from 22-23 February in Vienna to determine the challenge of the Belarus National Assembly against the Belarus 13th Supreme Soviet. The Credentials Committee, consisting of Mrs. Tone Tingsgaard, who headed the Committee, Mr. Antonio Reis, Mrs. Geertje Lycklama à Nijeholt, Mr. Kazys Bobelis and Mr. Charles Janssens, heard evidence from both parties, Ambassador

Wieck of the OSCE AMG as well as from Mr. Gert Weiskirchen and Mr. Urban Ahlin, who both returned directly from a visit by the OSCE PA ad hoc Committee to Belarus. Based on the evidence presented the Credentials Committee could not recommend recognizing either of the two delegations as the term of Session for the 13th Supreme Soviet as set out the Belarusian Constitution had expired and the elections for the National Assembly had been flawed and hence not internationally recognized. The

Credentials Committee did however recommend that both delegations be invited to Paris in order to address the Assembly on the democratic developments in Belarus and that the ad hoc Committee should continue its work in Belarus. The Credentials Committee presented their recommendations to the Standing Committee and after serious discussions it was concluded that there was no consensus on the language contained in the recommendations. As a result, however, the Belarus seat will still remain empty.

