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Parliamentarians Monitor Elections in Montenegro

"The overall electoral process was pluralistic, accountable and transparent" said OSCE PA Vice President Tiit Käbin, MP (Estonia) during the presentation of the preliminary findings after the parliamentary elections held in Montenegro on 22 April 2001. Mr. Käbin, who acted as Special Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister, Mircea Dan Geoana, said that the elections had generally complied with international democratic standards. The OSCE Election Observation Mission, which included an OSCE PA delegation of 40 parliamentarians from 16 OSCE participating States, concluded that a broad spectrum of political parties participated in the elections, that there was a pluralistic media landscape, and that there was exceptional transparency regarding public access to voting registers and the publication of detailed voting results at all levels. Whilst confirming that substantial progress had been made, Mr. Käbin acknowledged that *"some shortcomings remain"*. Political parties controlled the



Vice-President Tiit Käbin election monitoring in Montenegro

election mandates, there were small errors in the voter register, and a few instances of political pressure on state employees as well as police involvement in campaign activities. Despite these irregularities, Mr. Käbin emphasized that the polling and vote

count were largely in accordance with the law, and that the high voter turnout indicated public confidence in the electoral process. The OSCE PA Delegation was accompanied by Mr. Jan Jooren and Ms. Nina Caspersen of the International Secretariat.

President Severin Visits Central Asia

From April 27-March 5, 2001 President Severin will be visiting the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, to discuss their involvement in OSCE and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly activities. In each country Mr Severin will visit the OSCE Field Missions to familiarize himself with the current situation in the region. The general political, economic and human rights developments will be high on Mr. Severin's agenda. During the visit Mr. Severin will meet with high level officials including the Heads of State and Governments, Speakers of Parliaments as well as representatives of political parties and OSCE partner NGO's.

President Severin Requests Parliamentarians to Take on Special Roles

During the Expanded Bureau meeting of the OSCE PA held in Copenhagen from 19-20 April 2001, President Severin announced his decision to appoint three members of the Assembly to address topics of enduring importance to the Assembly. Vice-President Bruce George was asked to carry out in-depth analysis of how national parliaments deal with OSCE issues and how national delegations engage both in participating in the activities of the Assembly, and in promoting the achievements of the Assembly in their own parliaments. Mr. George was in particular asked to analyze how each of the Parliamentary Assembly's legislatures scrutinise and influence decisions of the executive on national security issues in the OSCE area.

In response to the Ukrainian Delegation's request for the OSCE PA to assist in improving the socio-political situation in Ukraine, President Severin asked 3rd Committee Chair, Mr. Gert Weisskirchen to assess the current political and social situation in Ukraine. Mr. Weisskirchen was asked to travel to Ukraine to appeal to the Ukrainian Parliament to find solutions to the current crisis, and to urge the various institutions and opposition to find ways to strengthen mutual confidence. Finally, Mr. Severin asked the Head of the French Delegation to the OSCE PA, Mr. Michel Voisin to consider becoming his Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs, in order to develop stronger links with the OSCE PA's Mediterranean Partners.