

News from Copenhagen

Number 28

Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

10 May 2001

Mr. Alcee Hastings Appointed to US Helsinki Commission

The Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, Congressman Alcee Hastings (USA), has recently been appointed to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, marking the first time that an African American will serve on the panel. This US Congressional Commission, which is commonly called the Helsinki Commission, was created in 1976 to ensure compliance with the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver Served as the Commission's first Chief of Staff from 1976-1985. Officially announcing the appointment of Mr. Hastings, U.S. Congressman Richard Gephardt said that Mr. Hastings' "key role as Ranking Democratic Member of the House Subcommittee on Europe and his knowledge of a broad range of foreign policy issues will make him an important member of this Commission". OSCE PA Vice-President Steny Hoyer – another member of the Commission – added that Mr. Hastings' "keen insight and knowledge of foreign affairs, his commitment to human rights, and his energy and dedication will certainly enhance the work of the commission".

Mr. Hastings was elected Chair of the First Committee of the OSCE PA at the OSCE PA Annual Session in Bucharest in 2000 after having served one term as Vice-Chair and two terms as Committee Rapporteur. First elected to the U.S. Congress in 1992, he has been re-elected three times. He is Vice Chairman of the Florida Delegation and serves on the International Relations and Intelligence committees. As attorney, judge and civil rights activist, he has championed rights of minorities, women and the elderly.

President Severin completes Central Asia visit

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Adrian Severin travelled from 26 April - 5 May to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as part of his first visit to the Central Asian region. During the visit, Mr. Severin met with the three Heads of State, the Speakers of Parliament, as well as other high level representatives from the executive and legislative branches. He also met with representatives of political parties, media outlets and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Severin's goal was to assess the situation in the region and to encourage the Central Asian countries to play a more active role in the OSCE in general and in the OSCE PA in particular. With this in mind, he was pleased to find a wide range

of support from all his interlocutors for a new initiative of the OSCE PA - the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum.

Such a Forum, which would bring together the parliaments from the Central Asian States as well as those from other OSCE participating States and from the Partners for Co-operation, would seek to address issues related to Central Asia through regional co-operation, a topic high on Mr. Severin's agenda. During the course of the visit, he stated on several occasions that "the obstacles against a more effective regional approach in the fight against poverty, terrorism and religious extremism are in themselves a source of instability which much be addressed properly."

While encouraging the Central Asian parliaments to play a more active role in addressing domestic and regional problems, Mr. Severin also encouraged the authorities to work more closely and to increase mutual trust with the OSCE centres in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the organisation's work in the field. Also, while recognising the importance that each country has placed on promoting economic development and regional security, he underlined the importance of strengthening democratic processes at the same time.

Mr. Severin intends to return to the region in the autumn to visit Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Head of Office in Yerevan visits OSCE PA International Secretariat

From 7-8 May 2001, the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan (Armenia), Ambassador Roy Reeve, visited the OSCE PA International Secretariat and had consultations with OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and other senior staff. Whilst in Copenhagen Ambassador Reeve spoke at a joint OSCE Parliamentary Assembly/Danish Institute of International Affairs (DUPI) roundtable discussion at the DUPI Office in Copenhagen. Ambassador Reeve gave a presentation on the role of OSCE Field Missions in general and of his Office in Armenia in particular.



From Right Spencer Oliver OSCE PA Secretary General, Amb. Roy Reeve, Head of OSCE Office in Yerevan and Lars Poulsen-Hansen, DUPI Senior Research Fellow

Election Update: Albania

The OSCE PA will monitor the Parliamentary Elections in Albania on 24 June 2001. The deadline for registering with the International Secretariat is 13 June 2001. For further information please contact Mr. Jan Jooren, Counsellor on Tel. +45 33378036 or e-mail jan@oscepa.dk

NATO PA Spring Session

The Head of the Lithuanian Delegation to the OSCE PA Dr. Kazys Bobelis, will represent the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session in Vilnius from 28-31 May 2001.

New Research Fellows

The following new Research Fellows have joined the International Secretariat
Mr. Eugene Gribov (Russia)
Mr. Patrice Quesada (France)