

News from Copenhagen

Number 33

Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

29 June 2001

Parliamentarians Monitor Elections in Albania

"This election represents another important step towards the consolidation of democracy in Albania" said Vice-President Bruce George presenting the Preliminary Statement of the International Election Observation Mission on the parliamentary elections held in Albania on 26 June. "The Balkans is a very unstable region politically, but we were struck by the quite peaceful way these elections were conducted" continued Mr. George who acted as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister, Mircea Dan Geoana. In this capacity Mr. George led more than 270 international observers including 40 OSCE parliamentarians, who were deployed across Albania on election day and delivered the Preliminary Post-election Statement at a press conference on 27 June in conjunction with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

In the Preliminary Statement the International Observation Mission addressed the main shortcomings of the elections particularly pertaining to attempts to field party candidates as independents, inaccuracies in the voter lists, and excessive deviations in the number of voters registered in some electoral constituencies.



OSCE PA Vice-President and OSCE Special Representative Mr. Bruce George (Left) presenting the Preliminary Post-election Statement at a press conference on 27 June 2001.

President Severin visits Poland

From 19 to 20 June 2001, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Adrian Severin paid an official visit to Poland invited by the Polish Parliament (Sejm).

On 19 June, Mr. Severin met the Speaker of the Sejm, Mr. Maciej Plazynski, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm, Mr. Czeslaw Bielecki, as well as with the Polish Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly including the Head of the Delegation Mr. Jerzy Osiatynski. In the meetings President Severin praised the Polish Parliament for its involvement and commitment to the activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. He also presented and discussed ideas for future action of the Assembly, including relations with other parliamentary institutions like the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

On the second day Mr. Severin held talks with the Speaker of the Polish Senate,

Mrs. Alicja Grzeskowiak and with Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek. In the afternoon he met the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski as well as with Secretary of State Mr. Siwiek and high representatives from the Defence Ministry. President Severin referred to the new political impulse needed by the OSCE and the importance of political guidance from capitals to enhance the processes of the Organization.

President Severin concluded his official visit to Poland by giving a lecture at Warsaw University entitled "Tomorrow's Europe - A community of fears or community of values?" in which he analysed the problems and prospects of the process of European integration from the perspective of the East and Central European States.

On Thursday 21 June, before his return to Bucharest, President Severin held a working meeting with Ambassador Stoudmann, Director of the ODIHR.

OSCE Troika

On behalf of OSCE PA President Adrian Severin, Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen attended the OSCE Troika meeting in Bucharest on 20 June 2001. Mr. Väänänen reported on recent activities of the Assembly in Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, and Central Asia, as well as increased co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. He also referred to the letter of President Severin to the Chairman-in-Office concerning the establishment of a consultative "Wisemen Group" which would be tasked with presenting proposals to the Chairmanship and the Presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly on the objectives, the solutions and the ways to reform the OSCE in order for the Organization to become more effective and more relevant to the participating States.

OSCE Parliamentarians visit Georgia

The OSCE Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia visited Georgia from 26-28 June 2001 to make a first assessment of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict settlement process. The delegation met with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, as well as with ministers,

parliamentarians and leading NGO's. The Head of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Jerzy Osiatynski said that the OSCE PA stands ready to assist in facilitating co-operation on constitutional arrangements which may meet the needs of all interested parties, while respecting the integrity of the Georgian state.

Belarus

From 30 June - 2 July, Ms. Uta Zapf (MP, Germany) and Mr. Urban Ahlin (MP, Sweden) will travel to Minsk to meet with representatives of the Belarusian Government and the National Assembly as well as members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the 13th Supreme Soviet, candidates in the upcoming presidential elections, non-governmental organizations and journalists. The goal of the visit is to assess the situation in Belarus in light of the work of the Credentials Committee on Belarus, scheduled to take place in Paris on 5 July.