

News from Copenhagen

Number 34

Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

20 July 2001

Assembly Paris Declaration Calls for More Oversight and Accountability in the OSCE

In Paris on 10 July 2001 nearly three hundred parliamentarians from fifty-two OSCE countries adopted the Paris Declaration which includes a unanimously adopted resolution on strengthening transparency and accountability in the OSCE. The Resolution contains the proposal that before making major decisions, to be defined in future consultations, the Ministerial Council should take into account the opinion of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly also recommends that as long as the OSCE complies with the strict consensus rule it must not be possible to participate in the decision-making process secretly and that objections to any proposal must be made known to any interested OSCE participating State or OSCE Institution. The Resolution furthermore calls for the reports of external and internal auditors of the OSCE to be made available to the Parliamentary Assembly in a timely manner. The PA also calls upon the OSCE Permanent Council to open its meetings to the public. An Ad Hoc Committee has been established to monitor the implementation of the resolution and to promote transparency and accountability in the OSCE. The Assembly re-elected Adrian Severin (Romania) as its President for a second term. Congressman Alcee Hastings from the United States, Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, (Finland) and Mr. Ahmet Tan (Turkey) were elected as Vice-Presidents of the Assembly for three-year terms and Mr. Jerahmiel Grafstein (Canada) was elected Treasurer of the Assembly for a two-year term.

The Paris Declaration, adopted by the Assembly after four days of debate in three general committees and plenary sessions, deals with political, economic and human rights aspects of the OSCE. In addition resolutions were adopted on abolition of the death penalty; prevention of torture, abuse, extortion or other unlawful acts; combating trafficking in human beings; combating corruption and international crime; freedom of the media as well as resolutions on South Eastern Europe, the North Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine.

All documents are available at the OSCE PA website at www.osce.org/pa

Election Update: Belarus

In expectation of an official invitation from the Belarusian authorities, OSCE PA is making preparations to send parliamentary observers to the Presidential elections on 9 September 2001. The **DEADLINE** for Registration with the International Secretariat in Copenhagen is 24 August 2001. For further information please contact Mr. Paul Legendre, Program Officer



OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Romanian Foreign Minister, Mircea Geoana addressing the Assembly and answering questions from the floor.

OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy Ceremony

During a special ceremony, on 6 July, the 6th OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy was presented to the widows of the murdered journalists Jose Luis Lopez de Lacalle (Spain) and Georgiy Gongadze (Ukraine). The Spanish and Ukrainian journalist were posthumously awarded the Prize for their furthering of OSCE values by intervening in conflicts and secretive political environments through their writing. Mrs. Gongadze and Mrs. Artolazabal de Lopez de Lacalle received the shared Prize from the Speaker of the French National Assembly, Mr. Raymond Forni. The Ceremony also included presentations by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Freimut Duve

and the Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Mr. Gert Weisskirchen. President Severin recalled that this was the sixth time the OSCE PA has presented the Prize, which has become an important and well-recognized OSCE instrument in the promotion of the freedom of the media. He expressed gratitude to the donors who have made the Prize possible through their generous financial contributions. The current donors are: Bertelsmann AG of Germany, The Bonnier Group of Sweden, Southam Inc. of Canada, Schibsted ASA of Norway and The George and Thelma Paraskevaides Foundation of Cyprus.



Mrs. Artolazabal de Lopez de Lacalle (Left) and Mrs. Gongadze