

News from Copenhagen

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Severin addresses Ninth Ministerial Council:

PA Claims Right to be Consulted, to Encourage and to Warn

In his address to the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Bucharest on 3 December 2001 President Severin strongly emphasized the need for a more formalized and prominent role for the Assembly in the work of the OSCE. *"The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly claims the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn. This implies the right to free and regular access to all events, meetings, debates and information"* he stated and continued *"National parliaments, let us remember, provide not only political support, but also political legitimacy for the decisions of OSCE executives...members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continue to play an important role in bringing public support to the OSCE as well as acting as a link between the Organization and national parliaments and governments. Members of parliament shape public opinion in each of our countries, and mobilize political, legislative, human, financial and budgetary resources to support our entire Organization."*

Addressing the international problem of terrorism the President emphasized the key role parliaments could play.

President Severin also addressed the need to further develop relations with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation. In this context he proposed that the People's Republic of China should be invited by the OSCE to become an Asian Partner for Co-operation. *"We cannot ignore the importance for security and co-operation of the world's most populous country with a common border with the OSCE. China's recent membership in the WTO adds an important new element in respect to its complex integration into the new global community. It is ever clearer that future patterns of world co-operative security will*



depend on the quality and nature of the relations between China and the OSCE States."

Following his address to the Ministerial Council, President Severin held bilateral talks which included meetings with the Foreign Minister of Spain, Mr. Josep Pique, the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Mr. Vilayat Guliyev, the Foreign Minister of Belarus, Mr. Mikhail Khvostov, the Foreign Minister of Morocco, Mr. Mohammed Benaïssa and the Foreign Minister of Algeria, Mr. Adelaziz Belkhadem.

Bureau Meeting

In conjunction with the Ministerial Council, a meeting of the Bureau was held on 2 December. The meeting, chaired by President Severin, was addressed by the Speaker of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Valer Dorneanu. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Dan Geoana also addressed the meeting and took questions from the floor. Mr. Geoana noted that the relationship with the Parliamentary Assembly was gradually improving and he expressed his support for the Assembly's proposal for a "wisemen group" of high-ranking people from both the parliamentary and governmental sides who could produce a joint policy paper.

The Bureau heard reports from the Chairman of the ad hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability in the OSCE, Congressman Steny Hoyer. Vice-President Bruce George reported on the recent Election Observation Mission to Kosovo which included more than 50 OSCE parliamentarians. The Bureau furthermore discussed the theme for the next Annual Session, which resulted in the proposal: "Confronting Terrorism - a Global Challenge in the 21st Century".



Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability

In conjunction with the Bureau Meeting on 2 December in Bucharest, Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability gathered in order to discuss their future work. Steny Hoyer from the United States, who chairs the Committee, stressed the need to enhance the level of implementation of OSCE PA Declarations and recommendations. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee also discussed the level of transparency in the OSCE as well as cases where recommendations from the OSCE PA have been implemented.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability was established in Paris by unanimous adoption of the resolution on 'Strengthening Transparency and Accountability in the OSCE'. The Committee is chaired by Steny Hoyer (USA) and includes Bruce George (UK), Rita Süßmuth (Germany) as Vice-chairs as well as Claude Estier (France), Ahmet Tan (Turkey) and Urban Ahlin (Sweden).