

Talks on Parliamentary Reforms in Kyrgyzstan



Bruce George meets with Kyrgyz President Akaev.

President Bruce George visited the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek from 9-10 June, 2003, to express the Assembly's and his own personal strong interest in reforms of the political system being conducted and planned in Kyrgyzstan.

During his stay in Bishkek, Mr. George had an extensive exchange of views with President Askar Akaev and the Speakers of the two chambers of the Kyrgyz Parliament, Mr. Abdygani Erkebaev and Mr. Altai Borubaev on the topics of constitutional and parliamentary reforms as well as on co-operation between the Kyrgyz government and parliament with the OSCE and in particular, with the Parliamentary Assembly. He emphasized the strong interest of the OSCE PA in the participation of Central Asian parliamentarians in the work and the gatherings of the Assembly, such as the upcoming Annual Session in Rotterdam. President George showed special

interest in the work of parliamentary committees and the role of the parliament in the drafting of laws and the control of the government.

Mr. George also visited the premises of the Kyrgyz Ombudsman, Mr. Tursunbai Bakir uluu, where he shared experiences with the staff of this new institution and discussed questions regarding human rights defence institutions in Britain, Kyrgyzstan and other countries. On behalf of the Ombudsman he personally asked President Akaev to increase his support of this important institution of democratic control.

At the end of his visit, President George met representatives on NGOs and political parties, who raised their concerns about the development of democracy, human rights and freedom of the media in Kyrgyzstan. Mr. George was accompanied by Programme Officer Paul LeGendre.

Bruce George Visits Ukraine

OSCE PA President Bruce George paid an official visit to Ukraine from 15-17 June 2003 in conjunction with his participation in an OSCE Seminar on the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Implementation of the Code of Conduct. During the course of the visit, Mr. George met with the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, as well as other members of parliament from a wide spectrum of political parties, the Foreign Minister, the Ombudsperson and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator.

President George stressed in his meetings with Ukrainian officials that Ukraine's further European integration will also depend substantially upon the pace of democratisation and on the conduct of future elections in the country. Mr. George recalled that as the Special Co-ordinator of the Chairman-in-Office to the 2002 Ukrainian parliamentary elections, "I reported that while some progress in the conduct of the elections was made, there were still considerable flaws in the process." Regarding the Presidential elections, tentatively scheduled for next autumn, he added that "I would be most pleased to be able to return to Ukraine next year and report that those elections were conducted in a free and fair manner in line with OSCE standards." To ensure such an outcome, he urged the Ukrainian authorities to begin already now to take measures to address the shortcomings in the electoral process so as to ensure public trust in the outcome of next year's Presidential elections.

As for the Office of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine, Mr. George pointed out that "during my visit one year ago, I expressed some anxiety over the impasse with regard to the future of the OSCE presence in Ukraine, but am most pleased to see on the occasion of this visit that the OSCE Project Co-ordinator's Office is now fully functioning." Mr. George encouraged continued co-operation with this Office and with other OSCE Institutions in tackling the challenges inherent in the democratisation process.

From the International Secretariat, President George was accompanied by Programme Officers Paul LeGendre and Alexander Staun-Rechnitzer.



President George meets with Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Anatoly Zlenko.

Parliamentary Dialogue on Oversight of Armed Forces

The OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held a joint seminar on 'Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security in Central Eastern Europe' in the Ukrainian Parliament in Kiev on 16 and 17 June 2003. This was the second such seminar aimed at promoting awareness of the parliamentary responsibilities outlined in the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and at fostering dialogue between senior military personnel and parliamentarians involved in oversight of armed forces. Keynote speakers and participants from the Assembly included President Bruce George, MP (United Kingdom) Vice-President Ihor Ostash, MP (Ukraine), Roberto Battelli, MP (Slovenia), Pieter De Crem, MP (Belgium) and Tone Tingsgaard, MP (Sweden).

The seminar aimed to provide participating States from Central and Eastern Europe with an opportunity to hear practical examples from expert speakers from other regions and from different research institutions, the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre. The first seminar in the series was held in Belgrade on 4-5 November 2002.