

## Bruce George Calls for Closer Ties with OSCE Mediterranean Partners

Upon the invitation of the Algerian Parliament, OSCE PA President Bruce George paid an official visit to Algeria from 26 to 30 September 2003. The purpose of the visit was to enhance the dialogue and co-operation between Algerian officials and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The visit also served as preparation for the Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean to be held in Rome from 9-10 October.

During his stay, the President held meetings with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem, and Minister of the Interior Yazid Zerhouni. The President also held talks with the Speaker of the Algerian National Council, Abdelkader Bensalah, and the Speaker of the Algerian National Assembly, Karim Younes. In addition, meetings took place with representatives of political groups, civil society and regional government, including a meeting with the Algerian Commission for Human Rights. During his stay in Algiers, President George also delivered a speech to the Algerian National Council on perspectives of security and co-operation



OSCE President Bruce George meets with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika

in the Mediterranean.

President George discussed a variety of issues with the Algerian authorities, including the prospects of further involving the Delegations for the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation in the activities of the Assembly. He emphasized that further development of the dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners is essential for the OSCE and that European security cannot be achieved without the co-operation with the countries from the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

During his visit, President Bruce George was accompanied by Presidential Adviser Gustavo Pallarés.

## OSCE PA holds talks in Moldova

“The Second Parliamentary Seminar on Federalism” took place in Moldova on 29-30 September 2003. The Seminar was organized by the OSCE Parliamentary Team on Moldova in close co-operation with the OSCE Mission.

The two-day event, which was opened by Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland), Vice-President of the OSCE PA, brought together more than 60 participants, including Members of the Moldavian Parliament, Transdnestrian Supreme Soviet and the Joint Constitutional Commission (JCC). Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia), Claudia Nolte (MP, Germany) and Leonid Ivanchenko (MP, Russia) also attended.

The purpose of the Seminar was to further promote the ongoing negotiations between Moldova and the Transdnestrian region on a new constitution for Moldova. In his opening remarks, Mr. Kiljunen stressed the need for compromise, stating that “the OSCE stands ready as an honest broker to give advice to both sides on what such

compromises could look like.”

During the first day, the participants discussed European experiences with federalism. In particular, they considered the division of budgetary powers between the centre and federal entities.



Roberto Battelli, Kimmo Kiljunen, and Claudia Nolte at the Parliamentary Seminar in Moldova.

During the second day, the work of the JCC was assessed. The speakers included representatives of the German Bundestag, Russian Duma, Venice Commission and the European Union. Ambassador William Hill, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and Ambassador Adriaan Jacobovits, Personal Representative

of the C-i-O, also addressed the Seminar.

The OSCE Parliamentary Team concluded that a dialogue between parliamentarians and politicians from both banks of the Nistru River is necessary for a lasting political solution. The Team therefore intends to continue to facilitate such dialogue.

## Parliamentary Troika on Belarus meets

On 25 September 2003, Urban Ahlin (MP, Sweden), Member of the Working Group on Belarus, travelled to Strasbourg for a meeting of the Parliamentary Troika on Belarus, composed of the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Parliament.

The participants in the meeting discussed the political situation in the country and recognised the importance of the parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2004. The Troika plans to visit Belarus in the coming months.

Mr. Ahlin was accompanied by Spencer Oliver, Secretary-General, and Paul LeGendre, Programme Officer, who also met with the President of the CoE Parliamentary Assembly, Peter Schieder and Secretary-General Bruno Haller, to discuss co-operation between the two parliamentary assemblies.