

News from Copenhagen

President George addresses the European Speakers of Parliament

The European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments and Parliamentary Assemblies was hosted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 18-19 May 2004. President Bruce George attended the Conference on behalf of the OSCE PA.

In his statement to the Conference President George discussed parliamentary cooperation. He stressed, in

particular, the need to cooperate in election monitoring pointing out that lack of such cooperation would undermine the international community's efforts to promote democratic elections. He also referred to the positive experiences in the Parliamentary Troikas. According to Mr. George the international parliamentary institutions should join forces in matters where their activities may overlap and where they share the same objectives. As a positive example of such cooperation he mentioned the Tri-Parliamentary Troika on Belarus.

During the Conference President George and Secretary General Spencer Oliver held bilateral talks with Arthur Baghdasaryan, President of the Armenian Parliament, and Sergey Mironov, President of the Council of Federations of the Russian Duma.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver also attended the meeting of the Secretaries General of European Parliaments and Parliamentary Assemblies. In Strasbourg President George was also accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen.



Javier Rupérez to lead UN Counter-Terrorism Committee



Spanish Ambassador to the US **Javier Rupérez**, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 1996 to 1998, has been

named Head of the restructured Counter-terrorism Committee (CTC) by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.



Heinz Fischer, who served the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for many years as Head of the Austrian Delegation to the

OSCE PA, was elected President of Austria on April 25.



At the end of April 2004, **Søren Gade** was appointed as the new Defense Minister of Denmark. Gade had served in the

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since December 2003 as Head of the Danish Delegation to the OSCE PA.

Good Governance debated in Warsaw

On 14 May, OSCE PA President Bruce George addressed the 2004 OSCE Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw. He welcomed the initiative of the OSCE and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to devote the Seminar to "Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance" and highlighted the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in democratic governance. "Representa-

tive institutions connect people to their governments by giving them a place where their needs can be articulated, by giving them a say in shaping the rules that govern them, by providing them with a recourse if governmental power is abused, and by contributing to the procedures and values that sustain a democratic culture", said the President.

In his address Bruce George reflected on the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's approach to democratic institutions and

democratic governance. Mr. George stated:

"The Assembly, as the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE, promotes parliamentary involvement in the activities of the OSCE and facilitates inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, providing a vital link between the governmental side of the OSCE and representatives who are directly elected by the popular will of the citizens of our member countries". The full speech is available at www.oscepa.org.