

News from Copenhagen

PA PREPARATIONS MOVE FORWARD FOR WINTER MEETING, WASHINGTON AND BRUSSELS

WINTER MEETING



Lizin



De Crem



Ivanchenko



Khol



Fischer



Rupel

The President of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer, will address the Winter Meeting in Vienna during the Opening Session on Thursday, February 24, along with the new OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel.

In keeping with established tradition, the Chairman In Office will answer direct questions from parliamentarians following his address. The Speaker of the Austrian Parliament, Dr. Andreas Khol, will address the meeting of the Standing Committee of Heads of Delegation. Senior OSCE officials, including Secretary General Jan Kubis, High Commissioner Rolf Ekeus, ODHIR Director Christian Strohal, Free Media Representative Miklos Haraszti, Anti-Terrorism Coordinator Brian Woo, and Director of the Conflict Prevention Center Lamberto Zannier will brief parliamentarians on various aspects of the work of the OSCE. Delegations should note that the reception traditionally hosted on Thursday evening by the Austrian Parliament will NOT take place this year due to the renovation of the Parliament Building. Thursday evening will therefore be available for Embassy briefings or social functions.

WASHINGTON

Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev, and General Services Officer Kurt Lerras will visit Washington D.C. in early February to carry out final preparations for the 14th Annual Session of the Assembly to be held July 1 – 5. The Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Mr. Dennis Hastert, has established a special unit within his office to oversee arrangements for the Session, which will be held in the United States for the first time. The International Secretariat team will also visit the meeting sites and hotels as well as venues for various social functions being planned by the American hosts.

The theme for the Annual Session this year is: *30 Years Since Helsinki: Challenges Ahead*. The Rapporteurs for the three General Committees have already begun their work and will discuss the ideas for their reports and draft resolutions during the Winter Meeting in Vienna. Secretary General Spencer Oliver met with the Rapporteurs of the First and Third Committees during his visit to Brussels this week. Senator Anne-Marie Lizin, President of the Belgian Senate, is the Third Committee Rapporteur and has already completed the first drafts of her report and draft resolution, which will be discussed with her colleagues in Vienna and finalized after the Expanded Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen in April. Mr. Pieter De Crem, opposition floor leader in the Belgian House of Representatives, is the Rapporteur of the First Committee on Political and Security Affairs and is preparing his first drafts for discussion with Committee colleagues at the Winter Meeting. The International Secretariat has been informed that Leonid Ivanchenko, Member of the Russian State Duma and Rapporteur of the Second Committee, has already finished the first draft of his report and is preparing a draft resolution which will also be discussed in Vienna and finalized after the Expanded Bureau Meeting in April.

BELGIUM IN 2006

Secretary General Oliver and Programme Officer Gustavo Palares began preparations for the 2006 Annual Session with a visit to Brussels on January 17 – 18. They had meetings with the Secretary Generals of the Belgian House of Representatives and the Belgian Senate, Mr. Robert Myttenaere and Mr. Luc Blondeel, along with other members of the staff team responsible for organization of the Session. While in Brussels, Mr. Oliver and Mr. Palares also visited the premises of the European Parliament and met with the Secretary General, Mr. Julian Priestly.