

# News from Copenhagen

## Fourth Annual Winter Meeting in Vienna

More than 200 parliamentarians from 46 OSCE participating States met from 24-25 February 2005 in the OSCE premises in Vienna for the fourth Annual OSCE PA Winter Meeting. The Winter Meeting consisted of two Joint Sessions as well as separate meetings of the three General Committees. On the first day, parliamentarians heard welcoming remarks by the President of the Assembly, Alcee L. Hastings, followed by addresses by the President of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer and the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, who took questions from the floor. The Chairman-in-Office highlighted the importance of the election-monitoring work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and encouraged parliamentarians to contribute actively to the current debate on reform of the OSCE.

*“The OSCE is facing a difficult moment, or an opportunity, depending on how you look at it. Significant changes in Europe, with EU and NATO enlargement and new challenges to security, have changed the way that we look at security in Europe, and, as a result, the role of the OSCE.”*

*“You have the reputation of being an incubator for fresh ideas. At a time when reform is so high on the OSCE agenda, I urge you to live up to that reputation,” he told the OSCE parliamentarians.*

The Winter Meeting also served as an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear presentations by the three General Committee Rapporteurs – Pieter De Crem, Leonid Ivanchenko and Anne-Marie Lizin – and to discuss ideas regarding their upcoming draft reports. Their reports will

focus on “30 Years since Helsinki: Challenges Ahead”, which is the central theme of the upcoming OSCE PA Annual Session in Washington, DC. The Second Joint Session of the Winter Meeting, on 25 February, started with a Report by Tone Tingsgård, the OSCE PA Special Representative on the Gender Issue, followed by a debate. OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubiš also addressed the Meeting, followed by a question and answer session. Mr. Kubiš emphasized that it was essential for the future of the Organization that the current impasse over the OSCE 2005 budget and new scales of contribution should be ended soon, because the current situation is untenable. The parliamentarians also heard reports by OSCE PA Treasurer Jerry Grafstein and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver. The Winter Meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee which heard welcoming remarks by the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Dr. Andreas Khol, followed by reports on current and upcoming activities of the Assembly.

### “Copenhagen Plus”

OSCE Chairman-in-Office Rupel said at the Winter Meeting that he was open to the idea of building upon OSCE election commitments agreed in Copenhagen in 1990. “Bearing in mind the fact that the OSCE Copenhagen Document is almost 15 years old, I see merit in considering whether additional commitments are needed. This is sometimes referred to as ‘Copenhagen Plus,’” he said.

not roll back existing commitments, or call into question the OSCE’s high reputation in election-monitoring. In other words, no ‘Copenhagen Minus’. That being said, we need to talk and to see if and how things can be improved.”

The Copenhagen Document outlines basic criteria for democratic elections and provides for all participating States to invite observers from other countries to determine their compliance with OSCE commitments.

“But this process should

