

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

Number 140

Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

3 March 2005

OSCE PA Committees Debate Challenges Ahead

During the 4th annual Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA, February 24-25 in Vienna, the Assembly's three General Committees prepared for the upcoming Annual Session. The July 2005 Session in Washington, DC will focus on '30 years since Helsinki, Challenges Ahead'.

First Committee



Vice-Chair Jean Charles Gardetto welcomed the gathered Members to the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security. In presenting ideas for his upcoming report and draft resolution, Committee Rapporteur Pieter de Crem, stressed the need for reform of the Governmental OSCE Institutions and the need for more productive follow-up to PA Declarations within the OSCE. Mr. De Crem also stressed that more operational resources should be devoted to the Cau-

casus and Central Asia and that areas such as drug trafficking and terrorism need greater focus within the OSCE.

The Committee heard a report from the Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council, Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, who explained the current problems surrounding the OSCE budgetary impasse, and discussed progress by the Organization in adapting to new challenges in combating terrorism.

The Chairman of the Forum for Security Co-operation, Ambassador Parviz Shahbazov, discussed projects on reducing small arms and light weapons. He urged Parliamentarians to create greater awareness and to stimulate debate within national parliaments on this issue.

The Chair of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Lamberto Zannier, gave an overview of the work carried out by his Department and by the Missions in the field. Dimitar Jalnev from the Action against Terrorism Unit highlighted the Unit's work in encouraging ratification of the 12 UN anti-terrorism conventions and stressed the need for their implementation.

In the debate following the presentations, Members called for a more political agenda for the Parliamentary Assembly and for effective reform of the OSCE, and questioned why the OSCE PA is not represented in the newly established OSCE Eminent Persons Group.

Second Committee

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment met under the Chairmanship of US Congressman Benjamin Cardin.

Mr. Leonid Ivanchenko, Rapporteur of the Committee, outlined his general ideas for the report and draft resolution to be introduced at the Annual Session in Washington, DC. Mr. Ivanchenko emphasized that economic co-operation remains a key principle of the OSCE: co-operation among the participating States and international and regional institutions and organizations is essential to strengthening security and stability and preventing conflicts.

The Committee also heard presentations from Mr. Patrick Moullete, from the OECD, on anti-corruption, and from Mr. Frederick Fournier, from the International Committee of the Red Cross, on the Tsunami relief efforts. Vice-President Panos Kammenos stressed the need for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to be active in encouraging participating States to contribute to the international relief efforts in South Asia.

Mr. Marcin Swiecicki, OSCE Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental affairs, outlined the OSCE activities in this field leading up to the Economic Forum to be held in Prague in May.

Chairman Cardin also thanked Vice-Chair Maria Santos (Portugal) who will no longer be a Member of the Assembly.



Third Committee

Chairperson Claudia Nolte opened the Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions by calling on the participating states to honour the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act by strengthening their commitment to the objectives of the OSCE.

The Committee heard presentations by several senior OSCE officials. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, stressed the connection between the protection of minority rights and the prevention of conflicts. Mr. Miklos Haraszti, Representative on Freedom of the Media, strongly urged all participating states to abolish criminal libel and insult laws.

The Rapporteur of the Committee, Anne-Marie Lizin, President of the



Belgian Senate, introduced a number of the ideas which will be addressed in her coming report for the Annual Session. In particular, the central role of state authorities in safeguarding fundamental freedoms and human rights must be carefully considered.

Both Tone Tingsgård, OSCE PA Special Representative on the Gender Issue, and Christopher Smith, OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues, addressed the Committee and spoke against the approach of combating trafficking through legalizing prostitution. Helga Konrad, OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, advocated combined work by states and NGOs to combat illegal migration and organized crime, as well as the protection of victims of trafficking.

Several parliamentarians raised the issue of media freedom and minority rights and commented on the situation in their respective States concerning trafficking and prostitution.