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OSCE PA Winter Meeting in Vienna Concluded



Barbara Prammer, Josep Borrell and Marc Perrin de Brichambaut addressed the Winter Meeting Opening Session, 22 February

The sixth annual Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly took place in Vienna on 22-23 February 2007. The Meeting was attended by a record 250 parliamentarians from 53 OSCE participating States, as well as partner countries.

Main speakers at the Winter Meeting included Göran Lennmarker, PA President; Josep Borrell, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Spanish Foreign Minister; Barbara Prammer, President of Austrian Parliament; and OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut.

Borrell talked of the growing importance of the Parliamentary Assembly and that it provided "inspiration and ideas as well as parliamentary support to the work of the OSCE."

During the Winter Meeting, the Standing Committee formally approved Kazakhstan as the host of the 2008 Annual Session and the Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, said that Kazakhstan is "eager to share an exceptional moment of dialogue with you," and assured all participants of

Kazakhstan's commitment "to make all necessary arrangements to ensure the Annual Session to be a real success." He continued by stressing that "We are convinced that the OSCE major forum will facilitate inter-parliamentary ties and co-operation as well as increase the comprehensive involvement of the Central Asian states in achieving the objectives of the OSCE." Mr. Tokayev also expressed his hope that Kazakhstan will become the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2009.

The important task of election observation was discussed at length. Members stressed that this is a key area of work for the OSCE, and the leading role played by the Parliamentary Assembly's remains absolutely necessary.

The parliamentarians also heard presentations of the rapporteurs of the three General Committees on political affairs and security; economic affairs, science, technology and environment; and democracy, human rights and humanitarian questions, and discussed their draft reports being prepared for the Annual Session from 5-9 July 2007 in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Parliamentarians Debate Energy Security in OSCE Area

A special debate on energy security took place at the Winter Meeting. Over 20 speakers participated, from the US and Canada to Western and Eastern Europe, as well as the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Many underlined the importance of the issue of finding global solutions that create stability and reliability while others stressed the environmental aspects of energy security, such as energy savings, conservation, and finding alternative sources to fossil fuels.

"We have less than ten years to avoid catastrophic climate change," said the head of the UK delegation, while the head of delegation of Norway, now the third largest oil and gas exporter in the world, said that energy "must never be used as a political instrument."

A number of speakers expressed deep concern over the absence of transparency and reliable prices and urged the

OSCE and the European Union to get increasingly involved and to create a common energy policy.



The Assembly's Bureau met on Friday, 23 February