

OSCE Special Envoy for Elections visits Secretariat

On his first trip since being appointed as the Chairman-in-Office's Special Envoy on election-related issues, Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland) paid a visit to the International Secretariat in Copenhagen on 31 March. Mr. Kiljunen, who is also Vice-President of the OSCE PA, met with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and other staff of the Secretariat.

The Special Envoy was appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to gather views on elections and election observation and to examine possibilities to develop OSCE election-related activities.

In Copenhagen, Mr. Kiljunen outlined his intentions and stressed that he was working for an open dialogue on election issues. He was fully briefed on recent and upcoming Assembly work in regards to elections. Discussion also focused on the staffing of OSCE missions and the importance of electoral experience for OSCE observers. The Special Envoy and Secretary General also considered OSCE commitments for elections as well as different electoral systems. Furthermore, there was discussion regarding the Assembly's co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR as well as OSCE co-operation with other international organizations such as the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly



Mr. Oliver and Mr. Kiljunen are seen here with Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn and Ann-Mari Froberg

and the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Mr. Kiljunen and Mr. Oliver both stressed the importance of adhering to current OSCE standards as outlined in the Copenhagen Document of 1990.

Mr. Kiljunen was accompanied by Ann-Mari Froberg from the Finnish Foreign Ministry.

Lizin and Oliver visit Guantanamo



Senator Lizin and Mr. Oliver were met by Admiral Mark H. Busby, Commander of JTF GTMO (center)

Upon the invitation of the U.S. government, OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Guantanamo Anne-Marie Lizin paid her third visit to the American detention facility at Guantanamo on 26 March. Secretary General Spencer Oliver also participated in the visit.

The state of prisoners in the detention facility has long been an area of interest to OSCE parliamentarians, who passed a resolution on the issue in July 2003.

During her visit to the detention facilities in Guantanamo Ms. Lizin was received and briefed by the Commander of the

Joint Task Force Guantanamo and other staff of the base. Ms. Lizin and the delegation visited the camps and cells housing the detainees and observed some of the operations in the facilities.

In addition, they visited the court rooms housing the military commissions which have been established to try detainees.

In advance of the visit to Guantanamo, Ms. Lizin met with a number of senior State Department and Defense Department officials in Washington, DC and again urged the U.S. government to make every effort to close the detention facility.

The number of detainees at Guantanamo has significantly decreased since Ms. Lizin's first visit in March 2006. U.S. government officials confirmed to Ms. Lizin the wish to transfer the majority of the detainees as soon as possible and to bring the most dangerous detainees before military commissions.

In order to accelerate the detainee transfers to third countries, notably OSCE participating States, Ms. Lizin has addressed letters to most of these countries.

During her visit Ms. Lizin was accompanied by Thibaut Cardon de Lichtbuer, Secretary of the Belgian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Professor Simon Petermann, and Patrick Stevens.