

Hastings Addresses Human Dimension Meeting

US Congressman Alcee L. Hastings – President Emeritus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly - addressed the Opening Session of the Supplementary OSCE Human Dimension Meeting on the “Role of National Institutions against Discrimination in Combating Racism and Xenophobia” in Vienna. The meeting examined cases involving persons belonging to national minorities and migrants and ways to overcome substantive challenges at the national and international level, and the role of specialized national institutions in this context. “The U.S. has an important story to tell in terms of how it has worked to overcome the legacies of slavery, segregation, the virtual extermination of Native Americans and other historic injustices. Recently, the Helsinki Commission held a series of hearings on racial minorities in Europe and found many similarities with experiences here. Because I was part of the struggle in the U.S., I understand what others are going through. This

is personal as well” said Hastings, who also chairs the U.S. Helsinki Commission in the US House of Representatives.



Lenmarker in Strasbourg and Berlin

President Göran Lenmarker participated in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament held at the Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg on 22 and 23 May. The Conference dealt with two essential challenges to Europe’s future: finding better ways to involve civil society more closely in the political life of our nations; and having the democratic, human rights and rule of law values that underpin all we do to find clearer expression in our daily policies, at national and European level. Lenmarker addressed the session devoted to the role of Parliaments in promoting core values of democracy, human rights and rule of law. In his speech he underlined the need for the parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE to enhance cooperation in those fields related to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and election observation activities. He stressed the need for promoting political dialogue including issues that pertain to the internal policies in Member States. President Lenmarker was accompanied in Strasbourg by Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallarés who participated in the meeting of Secretaries General of parliament organized on the margins of the Conference.

On May 27, 2008, President Göran Lenmarker addressed the Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in the plenary hall of the Reichstag building

in Berlin. Other speakers included the President of the German Bundestag, the German Foreign Minister, the NATO Secretary-General, the Governing Mayor of Berlin and other leading officials. In his statement, President Lenmarker commended the NATO PA for its leadership in converting the NATO from a defense alliance of the Cold War into an alliance that now includes many new members from the former Warsaw Pact and deals with a broad spectrum of new tasks. Both assemblies, said the President, which have been cooperating well and have undertaken joint election observation missions, should continue to explain to governments that no international agreement aimed at ending inter-state conflicts could function without the support of civil society, for which the support of parliamentarians is badly needed. Mr. Lenmarker was accompanied during his visit to Berlin by Ambassador Andreas Nothelle of the Vienna Liaison Office and Ann-Sofi Lindenbaum from the Swedish Riksdag.

Deadlines Reminder

All delegations are reminded of the following deadlines, in preparation for the Annual Session in Astana:

- Sunday 8 June - Deadline for submission of Supplementary Items
- Sunday 15 June - Deadline for submission of amendments to Draft Resolutions
- Sunday 22 June - Deadline for submission of amendments to Supplementary Items