

# News from Copenhagen

## President Soares emphasizes need for reform in the OSCE

With a year of “great challenges” ahead OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Joao Soares (Portugal) has said that it is “very important that both the governmental and the parliamentary sides of the OSCE are ready to meet the challenges we face.”

In an interview for the OSCE PA website, Mr. Soares noted that the OSCE “comprises a territory in which many of the major challenges and the major difficulties are occurring in the world,” and it is therefore in a unique position to comprehensively address common problems.

To do so, however, the Organization must be ready to embrace change and reform. Expressing his strong belief in the work that the OSCE does, the President warned that “we should be careful about the tendency that all great

international organizations have to get caught up in internal bureaucratic debates instead of looking outward.”

President Soares also emphasized the role of the Assembly in addressing challenges ranging from resolving “frozen conflicts” to promoting co-operation on energy production and consumption. “As experienced parliamentarians,” he argued, “we can use the powers and rights that we have to influence those who have the executive capacity in our Organization.”

Other issues discussed in the interview included the importance of the Mediterranean for the OSCE and the recent proposal by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev for a “new European security architecture.”

To read the full interview, please visit [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org).



### Soares visits OSCE PA Headquarters in Copenhagen

Joao Soares paid his second visit as OSCE PA President to the Assembly headquarters in Copenhagen on 28 January.

Meeting with Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretaries General Tina Schøn and Gustavo Pallarés and other staff, Mr. Soares discussed his priorities as President and upcoming activities of the Assembly.

The primary topics of discussion were upcoming election observation missions, the Winter Meeting in Vienna, the Economic Conference in Dublin, and the Annual Session in Vilnius. The President was briefed on the preparations for the Annual Session and was informed of the Assembly’s efforts to upgrade its website, including improving audio and video capabilities.

Mr. Soares also took time to meet with the PA’s Research Fellows, to discuss their ongoing work in supporting the activities of the Assembly. He was accompanied by the Secretary of Portugal’s Delegation to the PA, Nuno Paixao.

### Preparations for Vilnius Annual Session well under way

Members of the International Secretariat visited Vilnius on 19 and 20 January to continue work with the staff of the Lithuanian Parliament in preparation for the Assembly’s Eighteenth Annual Session to be held in the Lithuanian capital from 29 June to 3 July.

The Assembly’s Annual Session will be hosted on the premises of the Lithuanian Parliament in the centre of Vilnius. Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallarés, Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhiev and Administrative Director Kurt Lerras met with Members of the Lithuanian Delegation and held extensive meetings with the organizing committee of the host Parliament headed by Secretary General of the Lithuanian Parliament, Gintautas Vikelis.

The Lithuanian hosts are working hard to ensure a fruitful and well organized Annual Session. Vilnius is also the European Capital of Culture in 2009.