

News from Copenhagen

Córdoba Declaration: Crucial role for Parliamentarians in Fight Against Anti-Semitism and Intolerance

A Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly headed by President Alcee L. Hastings participated in the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance held in Córdoba, Spain on 8 and 9 June.

Members of the Delegation included Vice-President Gert Weisskirchen, who is also Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating anti-Semitism; Vice-President Nevzat Yalcintas; Treasurer Jerry Grafstein; and Senators Compagna and Castagnetti from the Italian Delegation. The Head of the Spanish Delegation to the Assembly, Mr. Javier Torres Vela, as well as three other members of the Spanish Delegation – Ms. Pozuelo, Mr. Posada, and Mr. López-Medel – actively participated in the Conference. The Delegation was accompanied by Mr. Gustavo Pallarés from the International Secretariat in Copenhagen.

The Córdoba Declaration by the Chairman-in-Office was issued as the concluding document of the Conference. Paragraph nine of this Declaration underlines the crucial role national parliaments play in the enactment of legislation as well as their role as a forum for national debate. The Declaration commends the work done by the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in raising awareness in the implementation of the OSCE commitments regarding racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and discrimination.

President Hastings addressed the opening session of the Conference. In his statement the President reminded participants of the important role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in bringing awareness in the OSCE to the fight against not only of anti-Semitism but racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, discrimination, sexism and religious intolerance. President Hastings stressed the need for the OSCE to continue

to strengthen its work on fighting anti-Semitism. Much of this work, he reminded participants, was initiated by the Parliamentary Assembly. Anti-Semitism and, and all other forms of intolerance are the results of fear, he concluded, “it is the fear and lack of knowledge of the diversity of humanity.”

President Hastings, Vice-President Weisskirchen, Senator Grafstein, and Mr. Torres Vela participated in a panel organised by B'nai B'rith International on the Role of parliaments in combating anti-Semitism. The parliamentarians discussed and shared experiences on national strategies in their own parliaments and constituencies on fighting anti-Semitism and intolerance.

A supplementary draft resolution on Combating anti-Semitism, introduced by Vice-President Gert Weisskirchen, will be debated at the Assembly's Annual Session to be held in Washington, DC in July.



OSCE PA President Hastings (right) meets with CiO Dimitrij Rupel and Spanish Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos

Ukraine Television Channel Five to be Awarded Journalism Prize

The Assembly will honour “the professionalism that Channel 5 has displayed by reporting important information even under difficult circumstances”, announced OSCE PA President Alcee L. Hastings earlier this week. Announced simultaneously by Congressman Hastings in Washington, DC, in a Press Conference by PA Vice-President Ihor Ostash in Kiev, and by the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Copenhagen, Ukraine Channel Five is to receive the prize during a special ceremony, on July 1 in conjunction with the Assembly's Annual Session in Washington, DC.

Nominated by the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA, the Assembly Bureau decided to award Channel Five the prize upon the recommendation of the Prize Committee.

Channel Five played a crucial role in the peaceful transition in Ukraine in October-December 2004 by reporting independently at a time when the government was placing strict controls on media, ignoring widespread discontent, and working to manipulate electoral processes.

“It is precisely such credible reporting, so courageously displayed by Channel 5, which the Assembly hoped to encourage in establishing this prize 10 years ago”, said President Hastings. The OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy was established by the Parliamentary Assembly in 1996 to award journalists or organizations who, through their work, have promoted OSCE principles of human rights and democracy.