

President Soares calls for Kyrgyz election in line with OSCE commitments



President Soares meeting with Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiev

During his visit this week in Central Asia, President Soares underlined the importance of the 23 July presidential election in Kyrgyzstan being held in line with OSCE commitments, while assuring that the observation mission to be deployed by the OSCE PA would present balanced conclusions following the election.

The visit to Kyrgyzstan is part of a week-long visit to Central Asia to support the work of OSCE field missions and meet with officials in the region. In the capital Bishkek, President Soares held a number of high-level meetings, including with President Kurmanbek Bakiev, Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbaev, and Parliament Speaker Rashid Tagaev.

In his meeting with members of the Kyrgyz delegation to the OSCE PA, Mr. Soares underlined the importance of active participation by the delegation, noting that it is the only multi-party delegation from Central Asia. He also voiced his support for Kyrgyzstan's initiative to facilitate discussions on regional security concerns, including on Afghanistan.

President Soares also welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Chairman of the Central Election Commission, the head of the ODIHR long-term observation mission, civil society, and political party representatives.

Mr. Soares, who was elected President during the OSCE PA Annual Session in Astana, Kazakhstan last year, began the trip in Almaty, where he met with the Speaker of the Senate of Kazakhstan, OSCE PA Vice-President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and discussed preparations for the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship in 2010 as well as regional security issues.

Also meeting with a broad array of representatives from political parties and civil society, the President highlighted the importance of continued reforms aimed at fulfilling OSCE commitments in Kazakhstan. He declared the Parliamentary Assembly's strong support for the work of the OSCE Centre in Astana, headed by Ambassador Alexandre Keltchewsky.

President Soares will end his Central Asia visit this week in Tajikistan. He is accompanied by Programme Officer Anna Chernova and Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker from the International Secretariat, and Nuno Paixao from the Portuguese Parliament.

Vice-President Grossruck on pre-election visit to Albania

OSCE PA Vice-President Wolfgang Grossruck, the Special Co-ordinator and head of the short-term OSCE Observer Mission appointed by the Chairperson-in-Office for the 28 June Parliamentary Elections in Albania, led the Assembly's second pre-assessment visit to Tirana on 8 and 9 June.

The delegation also included the PA's Special Representative on South East Europe, Roberto Battelli, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle from the PA's Vienna Office, and Advisor Lukas Mussi, the Austrian Parliament.

In addition to the talks with the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament, Jozefina Topalli, Prime Minister Sali Berisha, and the leader of the biggest opposition party, the Mayor of Tirana, Edi Rama, Mr. Grossruck also met with the Central Election Commission and the Minister of the Interior, Bujar Nishani.

Against the background of the ongoing polemics about the issuance of new ID cards for the citizens of Albania, the delegation made an intensive inquiry at the local headquarters of Aleat, the French/Albanian/American company that handles applications as well as production and distribution of the ID cards. The delegation met with the General Manager Jean-Alain Joun from Sagem Securite and took a thorough look at the production facilities.

The visit included meetings with the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Ambassador Robert Bosch, and the leader of the ODIHR Long Term Observers, Ambassador Audrey Glover.

Preparations for 18th Annual Session

Preparations for the OSCE PA's 18th Annual Session, to be held in Vilnius from 29 June to 3 July, are well underway. More than 250 Members of Parliament from 51

OSCE participating States are expected to participate in the Session, the theme of which is *The OSCE: Addressing New Security Challenges*.

The global financial crisis will be discussed in both the Second and the Third Committees, while the First Committee will focus on food security. Pending approval from the Standing Committee, the general committees will also debate and vote on 22 Supplementary Items covering a wide range of topics.

All Draft Resolutions and Supplementary Items are now available at www.oscepa.org.

