

REPORT

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Eighth Winter Meeting

Vienna, Austria

19-20 February 2009



OSCE PA

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Prepared by the International Secretariat of the OSCE PA

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING	2
FIRST JOINT SESSION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEES	4
COMMITTEE MEETINGS	10
First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security	10
Second General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment	12
Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions	14
SECOND JOINT SESSION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEES	16
Special Debate on Proposals for a New European Security Architecture	16
CLOSING JOINT SESSION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEES	18
Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues	18
Special Presentation on “Piracy as a New Security Threat”	19
PROGRAMME	23

Summary



Since February 2002, the OSCE PA has held an annual Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna. The Winter Meeting provides an opportunity for the three General Committees to hold discussions and be briefed by high-level OSCE officials. The Meeting also serves as an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear presentations by the three Committee Rapporteurs and to discuss their draft reports for the upcoming Annual Session. The Winter Meeting is the second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar.

The Eighth Winter Meeting on 19-20 February concluded with a lively debate on European security architecture, involving prominent speakers from Russia and France and almost 50 of the 250 parliamentarians participating in the Vienna meeting.

The security debate took place as a follow-up on recent initiatives by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and French President Nicolas Sarkozy for new European security arrangements.

“We need a fresh approach” remarked Alexander Groushko, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, one of the two main speakers. The other, Veronique

Bujon-Barre, Deputy Director for Political and Security Affairs in the French Foreign Ministry, talked about a new “crisis of trust in Europe” after the war last year in Georgia and the “need to re-establish that lost trust.”

During the opening session, OSCE PA President Joao Soares welcomed the 250 parliamentarians and underlined the importance of the OSCE being willing to engage and meet new challenges.

“The OSCE is an extraordinary organization and its greatest strength has been its flexibility, allowing it to adapt to new realities,” Mr. Soares said. “However, I fear that this flexibility is being lost here in Vienna. We parliamentarians must do what we can to keep the OSCE an effective forum for dialogue.”

He regretted the fact that the OSCE still lacks

transparency. Its meetings should be open, he said, and the consensus rule should be adjusted.

“We still have a lot of work to do to open up our Organization and I pledge here to continue my efforts to do that,” he said.

The two-day meeting – the second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar after the Annual Session – was addressed by a number of top officials, including the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Greece’s Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis;

the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Barbara Prammer; the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, John Tanner; OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

and several heads of OSCE Institutions.

During the closing session, the Delegates heard from OSCE PA’s Special Representative on Gender Issues, OSCE PA Vice-President Tone Tingsgaard, and Panos Kammenos, Greek Vice Minister of Mercantile Marine, Aegean & Island Policy, on “Piracy As a New Security Threat.”

The Winter Meeting’s agenda also included a special presentation on Kazakhstan’s preparations for its OSCE Chairmanship in 2010 by the Kazakh Delegation, led by its Head of Delegation and OSCE PA Vice-President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

In his presentation, Mr. Tokayev outlined Kazakhstan’s priorities for political and economic reforms. He stated that “our priorities are clear and irreversible.”

“We still have a lot of work to do to open up our Organization and I pledge here to continue my efforts to do that.”

OSCE PA President Joao Soares

Standing Committee Meeting



The Standing Committee consists of the OSCE PA's 56 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, the Fall Meetings and the Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget, and appoints the Secretary General. The 2009 Winter Meeting's Standing Committee met on 19 February and was addressed by several high-ranking officials.

Report by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Joao Soares

President Joao Soares opened the meeting and informed the Standing Committee of his activities since being elected President at the Annual Session in Astana.

Mr. Soares noted that during his Presidency the Assembly has been serving as a forum for open debate on the most important issues facing the OSCE region, such as the crisis in Georgia (which was debated during the Fall Meetings in September 2008), proposals for a new European security architecture (which would be discussed the next day, during the Winter Meeting's Special Debate), and the world financial crisis (which is the topic of the PA's Economic Conference in May 2009).

He also announced the re-appointment of a number of OSCE PA Special Representatives and the new appointment of envoys to lead Assembly work in Georgia and Afghanistan. Mr. Soares went on to describe his many activities as President, such as holding meetings with government and parliamentary leaders in the Russian Federation and leading the OSCE PA's Election Observation Mission to the United States.

Address by the OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut made the point that the OSCE was born in a context of division and has survived very challenging times. Stating that the Organization still plays a fundamental role in European security, he emphasized that the PA is a key aspect of this role.

He also underlined the importance of adopt-

ing the budget to guarantee the better functioning of the OSCE and all the related problems of the Mission to Georgia. Concerning gender equality in the OSCE, he explained that when it comes to hiring in the Organization, candidates are not seconded with gender balance in mind, which has made it difficult to improve gender balance in the OSCE Institutions.

Touching on the global financial crisis, Mr. de Brichambaut noted that the economic and environmental dimension has been one of the core areas of concern for the OSCE since its inception. He stressed that when it comes to this dimension, OSCE principles can be implemented in a very specific way.

He also pointed out that the countries in the process of economic emergence are profoundly affected by the global economic crisis. The Secretary General also regretted to inform the Standing Committee that the OSCE presence in Georgia had not been reconsolidated because there has been no consensus on a compromise. His hope was that, by the time of the next Winter Meeting, the situation would be different.

Report by the Treasurer of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Hans Raidel

The Treasurer of the Assembly, Hans Raidel, was pleased to inform the Standing Committee that the OSCE PA's fiscal year 2007/2008 remained within the approved budget for the 16th year in a row. He remarked on the efficient way the Assembly operates on such a low budget given the increasing number of its activities.

The report that was distributed to the Standing Committee, Mr. Raidel noted, represents a solid basis of understanding as it does not contain any doubt as to the status of accounts.

Standing Committee Meeting



Standing Committee Meeting



Report by the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, R. Spencer Oliver

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver informed the participants of the Assembly's recent activities, which have contributed to its steady growth as an important and influential international organization. He reminded the Delegates of two major upcoming events – the Economic Conference in Dublin in May 2009 and the Annual Session in Vilnius – and thanked everyone for their support.

Mr. Oliver reported that the Assembly has continued its important efforts in the field of election observation, sending delegations to lead OSCE observer teams in Georgia, Armenia, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Belarus and the United States over the past year. In the first half of 2009, he said, the PA would observe the elections in Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova and Albania.

The Secretary General also reminded the Delegates that *News from Copenhagen* and the OSCE PA's web site are excellent sources of up-to-date information on the activities of the Assembly. He stated that, over the past 16 years, the value of the PA's work has increased and that the development of the International Secretariat's Research Fellowship Programme has provided vital support to the staff.

Reports on Election Observation Activities, the Ad Hoc Committees and the Activities of the Special Representatives

OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen informed the parliamentarians of



upcoming election observation missions and encouraged an active participation from all the Delegations. The Standing Committee meeting also included reports from the Assembly's various Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, Uta Zapf, noted that positive results in Belarus have been increasing after the elections of 2008. She explained that the Working Group has become larger and reminded the Standing Committee of the upcoming seminar on economic issues which would take place in Minsk on 11 March 2009.

The Special Representative for Afghanistan, Michel Voisin, stressed the importance of assisting the local population in Afghanistan but highlighted that there are still many problems in carrying out activities in the country.

The Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, Alcee L. Hastings, reported on developments in Iraq and on the \$2.1 billion in humanitarian aid that the U.S. government has provided to alleviate the crisis of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). He underlined the extraordinary work of the Swedish government on Iraqi IDPs and refugees and reported on his recent visit to the Mediterranean. He said that there is the prospect for OSCE engagement in the Middle East Peace Process and increased co-operation in the Maghreb economy.

The Special Representative on South East Europe, Roberto Battelli, reported on his parliamentary visit to the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as his participation in a roundtable discussion on combating human trafficking, hosted by the parliament in Sarajevo. He also mentioned the upcoming OSCE election observation activities in the region.

Standing Committee Meeting



The Special Representative on the OSCE Budget, Petur Blondal, reported on the finances of the governmental structures of the OSCE, making specific recommendations on political and management questions relating to the budget.

Mr. Blondal discussed his September visits to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw and to the OSCE External Auditor in Oslo. Following his meetings, he concluded that the problem is not with the funding *per se*, but with the lack of an efficient regulatory framework, especially in terms of oversight and transparency. Another point raised was linked to human resources and to the implementation of OSCE Staff Regulations.

The Special Representative for the Fight against Transnational Organized Crime, Senator Carlo Vizzini, spoke about the current global economic recession and its effects on the increased activities of organized crime networks, especially with regard to money laundering operations. He underlined the links between various international mafias and the expansion of the Chinese mafia. He also drew attention to organized crime activities in the

sub-Saharan African Region, in particular concerning trafficking in human beings and arms smuggling.

The Special Representative for Central Asia, Kimmo Kiljunen, said that the role of the PA in Central Asia has improved, especially regarding parliamentary co-operation. All countries have been very active, with the exception of Uzbekistan. He also listed some events that would be taking place in the region in 2009 and 2010, such as the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum in Kazakhstan.

The Special Representative on Nagorno Karabakh, President Emeritus Goran Lennmarker, underlined the need for a peaceful resolution, agreed to by both parties, in particular through understanding at the individual level. He also stated that the parliamentary dimension in conflict resolution needs to be strengthened.

Mr. Lennmarker expressed his concern over the security environment in Georgia. He pointed out that there are mainly three issues that should be considered: the need for observers along the administrative boundary line to prevent further incidents; the need to guarantee the right to return home, especially for IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia (and again the consequent role of observers in providing protection); and the need to ensure that no more bases and military equipment reach the region.

The Standing Committee concluded with reports on preparations for upcoming OSCE PA meetings, including the Bureau Meeting on 19-20 April in Lisbon, Portugal; the Economic Conference in Dublin, Ireland on 27-29 May; the Eighteenth Annual Session from 29 June to 3 July in Vilnius, Lithuania; and the Fall Meetings on 9-12 October in Athens, Greece.

First Joint Session of the General Committees



**Opening Remarks by Barbara Prammer,
President of the Austrian Nationalrat**

**John Tanner, President of the NATO
Parliamentary Assembly**

The President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Barbara Prammer, opened the Joint Session of the three General Committees by welcoming all Delegations and praising the established tradition of holding the Winter Meeting in Vienna, thus uniting the OSCE Institutions in the city and showcasing the work of the respective member governments.

Additionally, she recognized the 20th anniversary of the end of the Soviet era and the East-West division of Europe, a process in which the CSCE played a significant role. Ms. Prammer also emphasized the preventive nature of the OSCE, an important characteristic at this time given the ongoing conflicts in the Caucasus.

In regards to the proposals for a new European security architecture, President Prammer called on all parliamentarians to join the current debate, underlining that the early success of the CSCE relied heavily on parliamentary efforts. She stressed the idea that a comprehensive security framework is critical especially during times of economic hardship. She also emphasized that in the context of the financial crisis, international security is particularly vulnerable.

Many challenges lie ahead, Ms. Prammer pointed out, especially in the struggle for disarmament. In this regard, she highlighted Austria's leading role in the fight to ban cluster munitions and its efforts to enhance the signing process of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Finally, Ms. Prammer discussed gender balance, a topic that has yet to find its way into mainstream politics despite its important effects on the prosperity, rule of law and democratization of individual countries.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly President John Tanner began his remarks by outlining the great similarity in the work of the NATO PA and the OSCE PA. Not only do the two Assemblies share the same goals and even some of the same members, but they also reflect on a deep mutual association. Additionally, Mr. Tanner reminded the assembled Delegates about the importance of reinforcing their joint efforts in order to bear an even greater responsibility in this time of crisis.

President Tanner acknowledged new commitments from the United States to act preventively instead of preemptively in times of future conflict. According to Mr. Tanner, there are two main challenges that lie ahead: the fallout from the global financial crisis and the ongoing efforts to stabilize Afghanistan.

Additionally, Mr. Tanner recognized that the OSCE PA is an important body in a world where goods cannot always easily cross borders, but crimes do. Considering this point, he argued that the OSCE should work to strengthen its role as an early warning system. Finally, as a leading forum for co-ordinating efforts in a vast region, the OSCE PA is a symbol of teamwork in places where vain individual efforts no longer suffice.

Joao Soares, President of the OSCE PA

President Joao Soares started his presentation by highlighting the growing size of the meeting, noting that the 2009 Winter Meeting was the largest one yet. President Soares declared that the biggest advantage of the OSCE is its

First Joint Session of the General Committees



Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Nationalrat



OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Dora Bakoyannis

flexibility to adapt to new realities. He personally expressed his strong belief in the OSCE's potential to meet new challenges. However, Mr. Soares acknowledged that the Organization lacks transparency and that there is a need for the consensus rule to be adjusted. Election observation remains the centerpiece of the work of the OSCE PA, Mr. Soares said, because the expertise of parliamentarians cannot be met by the qualifications of bureaucrats. Additionally, Mr. Soares drew particular attention to the importance of all parties respecting the 1997 Cooperation Agreement on OSCE election observation activities. He concluded by expressing his great hope in the Greek Chairmanship.

Dora Bakoyannis, Foreign Minister of Greece and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

Minister Dora Bakoyannis began by expressing her concern about the serious crisis in the Caucasus, emphasizing the high number of displaced persons. She called the current situation a wake-up call to preserve the fragile cease-fire. She also said that the threat of technical closure of the missions in Georgia still remains, and therefore, the OSCE should increase, not reduce, its efforts regarding Georgia.

Regarding the aspirations of the Greek Chairmanship, Ms. Bakoyannis expressed her desire to serve as an honest broker for all OSCE participating States. Furthermore, she outlined several priority areas: advancing crisis management, improving the effectiveness of the OSCE by strengthening its legal status, and following through on commitments to border security and policing.

With the Economic Conference in Dublin in mind, Chairperson Bakoyannis initiated a discussion of the multi-dimensional challenge

caused by uncontrolled migratory movements. She said that a result-driven dialogue should begin ideally well ahead of the Fall Meetings in Athens.

Furthermore, Minister Bakoyannis stated her commitment to addressing the long term threat of climate change and the need to initiate a multi-level dialogue on the issue.

Election observation remains the flagship activity for the OSCE PA, Ms. Bakoyannis said, stressing that successful collaboration between the PA and ODIHR is vital to the success of this important OSCE endeavour.

On other issues, Ms. Bakoyannis criticized the continued habit of delaying the Unified Budget, and she urged the Delegates to find prompt agreement on the issue. She finally elaborated on the current security architecture proposal and emphasized that the OSCE is the natural platform for pan-European discussions.

Ms. Bakoyannis concluded by articulating three guiding principles for the OSCE: modesty, consolidation and deliberation. She underlined that careful work is needed to continue and uphold the legacy established in Helsinki in 1975.

Following the Foreign Minister's address, a question and answer session was held in which a number of important issues were addressed. The crisis in Georgia was discussed, as well as relations between the OSCE PA and ODIHR in election observation.

Another issue that came up concerned allegations of censorship of the OSCE web site, which had recently refused to publish statements made by the OSCE PA and its President. Ms. Bakoyannis reminded the Delegates that there are binding obligations to which every representative of the OSCE is subjected.





First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



**Jean-Charles Gardetto,
Chair of the First Committee**

In his opening remarks, Jean-Charles Gardetto, Chair of the First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, introduced the Committee's speakers and expressed his hopes that 2009 produces progress in resolving the "frozen" conflicts in the Caucasus and Transnistria. He remarked that the cost of human lives is too high to ignore these conflicts, and that their resolution is essential to secure stability, human rights, and the rule of law. Mr. Gardetto also suggested that the Parliamentary Assembly could be used as a suitable international forum to exchange views on the gas crisis and future questions of energy security.

Ambassador Eric Lebedel, Chairman of the Forum for Security Co-operation

In his presentation, Ambassador Eric Lebedel described the structure and functions of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) and highlighted its three subsidiary working parties: Working Group A, which focuses on technical matters of the FSC mandate, specifically the Code of Conduct and Small Arms; Working Group B, which deals with military security, cyber security, and methods of improving stability; and the Communications Group, which includes experts who ensure that all Delegations have satisfactory communications with one another.

Ambassador Lebedel explained that the FSC is based on three founding documents: the 1999 Vienna Document, the Code of Conduct related to the Political-Military Aspects of Security, the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Munitions. The Chairmanship



**Eric Lebedel, Chairman
of the Forum for Security
Co-operation**

of the FSC rotates every four months, and it changes in correspondence to the French alphabet. Since January, France has held the Chairmanship. This year the FSC will be led by France, Georgia, and Great Britain.

In conclusion, the Ambassador stated that the FSC is a useful tool, especially in conjunction with the Permanent Council (PC). To give a few examples, Lebedel remarked that on 11 February, Ambassador Hansjorg Haber, Chief of the EU Evaluation Mission to Georgia, came to speak at a joint FSC-PC meeting, as did the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, M.A. Groushko, on 18 February. Ambassador Lebedel was pleased that these meetings gave the Organization the opportunity to put the new comprehensive security concept at the forefront of its discussions.

Ambassador Mara Marinaki, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

Ambassador Mara Marinaki of Greece stated that the Parliamentary Assembly's Winter Meeting presented an excellent opportunity to share views on the burning questions of the day. Characterizing the OSCE as members of a single family with shared values, she promoted the concept of indivisibility while acknowledging that last year saw OSCE principles challenged with the conflict in Georgia. However, she argued that the Organization had worked hard to manage the crisis through OSCE conflict management and confidence-building measures, as well as through its field missions, the work in Vienna and its delegations of the Parliamentary Assembly. Ambassador Marinaki suggested that conditions of equality are what make the OSCE unique. The consensus required by participating States makes decisions difficult, but it also makes results the most rewarding.

First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



Mara Marinaki, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

Ms. Marinaki also pointed out that the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation work together in crisis management to react to unusual military activities and to co-operate and respond to new security threats. The Ambassador noted that the Permanent Council is a forum for political dialogue with an executive structure for implementing its decisions. In her closing remarks, she asserted that the OSCE works to support States and societies and continues to work towards a free and peaceful Europe.

Riccardo Migliori, Rapporteur of the First Committee

Riccardo Migliori, Rapporteur of the First Committee, made a presentation on topics to be considered at the 2009 Annual Session in Vilnius. Mentioning that the OSCE is founded on the principle of the indivisibility of security, Mr. Migliori emphasized that all countries must work together on crosscutting issues, such as organized crime, terrorism, cyber crime, and the global financial crisis. He argued that in this context, food shortages are also a threat to security, and therefore is a topic that he would like to see raised at the 2009 Annual Session.

The Rapporteur remarked that the OSCE can no longer ignore the challenge of food shortages throughout the world. For example, in 2008, Egypt, Tunisia, Ukraine, and parts of Asia limited grain exports due to domestic shortages and rising costs. He highlighted crops being produced for energy rather than food, climate change, the decline of the rural economy, and the increase of populations in developing countries as causes for food insecurity.

Mr. Migliori maintained that food security ought to be a priority of the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly because shortages

involve instability, inequality, and famine, which contribute to insecurity. He stated that this topic requires more commitments from governments and parliaments, and more work must be done to promote the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Consiglio Di Nino, Vice-Chair of the First Committee

Consiglio Di Nino, Vice-Chair of the First Committee, presented a report highlighting some of the activities that the OSCE and its participating States have taken to address the recommendations made by the Assembly in Astana in July 2008. On the regulation of private military and security companies, Mr. Di Nino noted that since Astana, ten OSCE participating States had signed on to the Montreux Document, which reaffirms that military and security contractors in war zones must comply with relevant international law.

Regarding transparency and institutional reform within the OSCE, Mr. Di Nino regretted that no changes had taken place, and that the Permanent Council had not provided feedback to the PA's recommendations to be better integrated into the OSCE decision-making processes.

On cluster munitions, Mr. Di Nino was pleased to inform the Committee that 33 OSCE participating States had signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. Mr. Di Nino also recalled the Committee's urging of the Organization, national parliaments and governments to strengthen their contributions, both in terms of military and humanitarian aid, to Afghanistan's security and stability.

Discussion

The ensuing discussion in the First Committee covered many issues, particularly the security situation in the South Caucasus and the recent Gaza crisis in the Middle East. Parliamentarians discussed ways to strengthen the OSCE's efforts to encourage conflict resolution and disarmament in the South Caucasus. The participants also discussed ways that the OSCE could increase participation with its Mediterranean partners to promote and secure peace in the Middle East.

Second General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment



**Petros Efthymiou,
Chair of the Second Committee**

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment met on 19 February and was chaired by Petros Efthymiou.

Mr. Efthymiou opened the meeting by stressing the importance of the "second basket" and recalling that during the Fall Meetings in Toronto parliamentarians had learned of the collapse of financial giant Lehman Brothers, one of the events in the spiralling global economic crisis.

With this in mind he informed participants that in the coming months the Committee would be focusing its efforts on addressing the crisis, which in fact was the primary topic of the upcoming OSCE PA Economic Conference in May hosted by the Irish Parliament.

**Ivor Callely, Rapporteur of
the Second Committee**

Mr. Callely, Rapporteur of the Committee, detailed his ideas and intentions regarding his Report on the financial and economic crisis for the Annual Session in Vilnius. He outlined the origins and the mechanisms of the current financial crisis, stressing that causes are to be found on both the macro-economic level (global capital imbalances) and the micro-economic level (flawed banking regulation).

He made clear that in his Report for the Annual Session, he will consider the effects of the current crisis on political and security con-



cerns in the OSCE area. He emphasized that the economic meltdown has already a profound impact on societies, especially regarding social unrest that have spread since the onset of the financial crisis in many participating States.

The debate focused mainly on concerns about the rise of protectionism with some parliamentarians underlining the need for free trade and others emphasizing the need to balance free trade, markets and government. The necessity for a global regulatory overhaul to measure risks in an accurate manner was also touched upon. Some parliamentarians noted that since we are still in relatively early stages of the crisis it would be useful to hear in Dublin and in Vilnius on best practices in participating States on steps they may have taken to tackle the financial crisis.

**Goran Svilanovic,
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and
Environmental Activities**

Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, reported on his activities and spelled out the main priorities of his office which are in line with those of the Greek Chairmanship. These include, *inter alia*, migration issues, as well as capacity and institution building. Mr. Svilanovic underscored that migration should not be deemed a threat since it is recognized that it improves the economic output of the countries of destination. Sustainable environment and security are also paramount issues, above all in the context of climate change.

Second General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment

Roland Blum, Vice-Chair of the Second Committee

Roland Blum, Vice-Chair of the Committee, summarized the Follow-Up Report to the Astana Declaration which focused – among other issues – on climate change, Chernobyl, free trade, debt relief and revenue transparency in the extractive industries.

Among these topics, Mr. Blum focused particularly on climate change, hailing the recent initiatives in the OSCE participating States and most saliently the Climate Energy package adopted by the European Union and the designation by the Obama Administration of a new envoy for tackling climate change.

Mr. Blum also concentrated on free trade. Recalling the mistakes made after crisis of 1929, he emphasized that protectionism is only likely to deepen the crisis and its fallout. The Vice-Chair also highlighted the need for overhauling our economic model and giving more place to industry and better regulation.

Discussion

During the debate a number of parliamentarians drew attention to the growing trend of protectionism in the OSCE area, arguing that these sorts of measures are not the answer to the economic crisis and could lead to greater political instability.

Ambassador Werner Almhoffer, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, summed up the situation in Kosovo one year after the declaration of independence and outlined the main economic issues against the backdrop of the financial crisis. Mr. Almhoffer acknowledged that as a small territory, Kosovo should benefit from a certain time lag before it gets touched by the tide of the crisis. It should then get better prepared, especially in the light of rising trade deficit, falling foreign direct investment and exports.

Parliamentarians underlined the need to improve the situation in Kosovo. It was emphasized that despite the active involvement of several international organizations, Kosovo still remains a sensitive case on crime, trafficking and corruption issues. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo was praised, however, for its contributions to the fight against corruption.



Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Walburga Habsburg-Douglas, Acting Chair of the Third Committee

Meeting on 20 February, the Third General Committee was chaired by Walburga Habsburg-Douglas, in the absence of the Committee Chair Hilda Solis.

Ms. Habsburg-Douglas began by congratulating Ms. Solis on her recent appointment as Secretary of Labor in the cabinet of U.S. President Barack Obama, and then outlined the committee's three priorities for the meeting: follow-up on past work, preparation for future work, and interacting with the OSCE's governmental side.

She then presented the Follow-Up Report and opened the meeting up for discussion. Topics addressed during the discussion included the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, OSCE election observation, the humanitarian consequences of the recent Gaza conflict, and U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. Delegates also noted the danger of rising xenophobia during this period of economic crisis.

In closing the debate, Ms. Habsburg-Douglas thanked the Delegates for their remarks and expressed her belief that a peaceful compromise on Nagorno-Karabakh would soon be reached, at least partly thanks to the efforts and hard work of President Emeritus Goran Lennmarker.

Natalia Karpovich, Rapporteur of the Third Committee

The Committee Rapporteur, Natalia Karpovich, presented her ideas and intentions regarding her upcoming Report for the Annual Session. She expressed her appreciation for

the fact that children's rights had emerged as a priority from discussions with the other Delegates. She also mentioned that, while the Assembly's Delegates came from a variety of backgrounds, everyone is faced by two common threats: unresolved conflicts and refugees. She said that she hoped to address these concerns in the first section of her report, placing particular emphasis on the need to address IDP and refugee issues throughout the OSCE area.

For the second section, Ms. Karpovich said that it was her intent to discuss the effects of the world financial crisis on the social dimension. She said that both labour migration and rising levels of unemployment were concerns that needed extra focus. She noted that unemployment rates are higher among women than men in most participating States, and that women are currently the most vulnerable to the effects of the economic downturn. Finally, the Rapporteur said that much had been achieved in promoting human rights and the rule of law, but that much work remained to be done. She added that she was open to additional suggestions given the large scope of the Committee's mandate and experiences.

In the ensuing discussion, Delegates pointed to a range of issues that they would like to see also covered in Ms. Karpovich's Report. One suggested that the death penalty should be addressed at the Annual Session, while other topics included migration, youth unemployment, nationalism and racism.

The Rapporteur noted that there would be many issues to cover in her report and thanked the Delegates for their feedback. She said that she would be interested in adding a third section to her report to discuss the demographic crisis.

Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Mr. Haraszti began by stating that parliamentarians are the highest guardians of human rights and should work to promote human rights all over the world. He said that he had prepared a “trouble list” that consists of typified problems that stretch across many state and social boundaries.

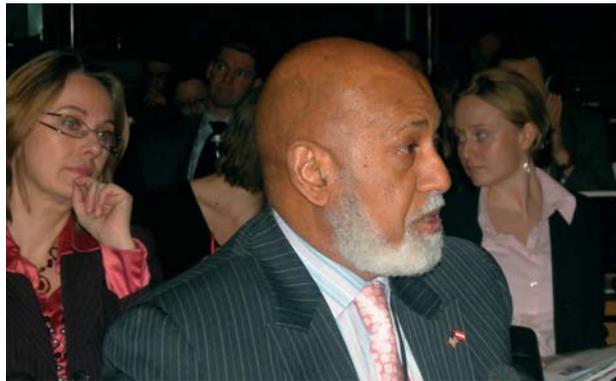
First, he said, the emergence of a belief that human rights and democracy are “relative” has been used by some participating States to dilute their commitments. Mr. Haraszti insisted that this practice must stop, that human rights are universal and that they serve as the very foundation of the OSCE. He criticized the claims by some States that being held accountable for bad practices is an intrusion into “internal affairs.” Secondly, he brought up the obligation for all participating States to stop the intimidation and killing of journalists. He said that, in such an atmosphere, there is a risk that journalists and editors will engage in self-censorship, which in turn harms democracy and encourages a deepening culture of corruption.

Mr. Haraszti also argued that attitudes on “extremism” should be adjusted, contending that being critical of a government should not be included in its definition. Also, journalists are sometimes prosecuted for breaching security when they reveal damaging information about government corruption. He insisted that journalists ought not be punished for upholding the principles of transparency and accountability.

Janez Lenarcic, Director of ODIHR

Janez Lenarcic began his remarks by applauding the focus in the Astana Declaration on the need for transparency. He contended that parliamentarians are agents of change, who bring a strong combination of credibility and experience with them in their efforts to facilitate a decision-making process built on transparency. Mr. Lenarcic said that the Astana Declaration is an excellent starting point for promoting democratic development and agreed with Mr. Haraszti’s point that relativity has become a problem in the OSCE area.

The Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Lenarcic said, is a source of new ideas and has proven this point time and again. Many of the issues that ODIHR deals with were topics dealt with



by the Assembly in its earliest days. Given that ODIHR and the Assembly both recognize the importance of certain issues, he said that ODIHR is ready to support the PA in its activities. The potential for the two Institutions to complement each others’ work is strong, he said, and that close co-operation would ensure that the OSCE would remain the world leader in election observation.

Discussion

In the debate that followed the remarks of the two specially invited guests, a number of issues were addressed including migration and xenophobia. OSCE election observation activities were also discussed, with some Delegations asking whether ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly would be working together in the future.

Former PA President Alcee Hastings, who has led numerous election observation missions, highlighted the fact that the Assembly has been leading OSCE election observation missions for 16 years and that it is ODIHR that usually deviates from the 1997 Co-operation Agreement that governs the relationship between the PA and ODIHR in this process. Mr. Hastings pointed out that under the Agreement, “the Chairman-in-Office places leadership of the election observation missions directly to the Parliamentary Assembly.”

Mr. Hastings went on to criticize the fact that the staff of the ODIHR lacks political experience and “doesn’t have a single person who has ever been elected to anything.” The former President went on to say that “We need to stop this divisiveness and get on with the critical business for the OSCE that allows for co-operation of the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR and Council of Europe and the NATO Assembly and anyone else that is interested in developing democracy as it pertains to elections.”

Second Joint Session of the General Committees



Special Debate on Proposals for a New European Security Architecture

The three General Committees met in joint session on 20 February for a Special Debate on proposals for a new European security architecture. The debate, involving prominent speakers from Russia and France and almost 50 parliamentarians, took place as a follow-up on recent initiatives by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and French President Nicolas Sarkozy for new European security arrangements.

“We need a fresh approach,” stated Alexander Groushko, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, one of the two main speakers. The other, Veronique Bujon-Barre, Deputy Director for Political and Security Affairs in the French Foreign Ministry, talked about a new “crisis of trust in Europe” and the “need to re-establish that lost trust.”

Mr. Groushko highlighted “the growing dissatisfaction with the state of security in the Euro-Atlantic region” and noted that “more and more voices [are] calling for a readjustment of the entire Euro-Atlantic security architecture in all its principal aspects.” He acknowledged that there are “different points of view as to how we should move forward” but pointed out that “the purpose of dialogue [is] to seek and find points of convergence.” He expressed the willingness of the Russian Federation “to do just that.”

Ms. Bujon-Barre emphasized “that any discussion on the renewal and the improvement of security on our continent has to be done in respect to principles on which European security is currently based: the transatlantic bond, the preservation of existing institutions (NATO, OSCE, EU), a comprehensive view of security including the political and military dimensions

as well as the human and the environmental dimensions, and respecting the Helsinki Final Act as well as the 1990 Charter of Paris.”

The French and Russian presentations were followed by a lively debate with some Delegates embracing President Medvedev’s proposal and others reacting coolly to it. There were calls for closer and more genuine co-operation and enhanced debate, including with the Russian partners. Several Members pointed out that the Russian proposal could serve as a stimulus for future negotiations and disarmament efforts, as well as alleviation of East-West tensions.

Others argued that before negotiations on European security could be launched, mutual confidence should be re-established and “frozen” conflicts solved. Concerns were raised over the possibility of jeopardizing existing structures and for the need to value agreements already in place. It was widely agreed that the OSCE is the best forum for this discussion to continue with many Delegates insisting that the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security be maintained. It was also stressed that security standards in the OSCE region are indivisible. Furthermore, the need for binding commitments concerning OSCE agreements was expressed.

Presentation on the Preparations for the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE

The security debate was followed by a special presentation on Kazakhstan’s preparations for its OSCE Chairmanship in 2010. In a presentation entitled “Path to Europe,” the Head of the Kazakh Delegation, OSCE PA Vice-President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, outlined in detail Kazakhstan’s priorities for political and economic reforms.

Second Joint Session of the General Committees



Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



In the closing session, the three General Committees heard a report by the Special Representative on Gender Issues, Tone Tingsgaard, and a special presentation on “Piracy as a New Security Threat” by Panos Kammenos, who serves as Vice Minister of Mercantile Marine, Aegean & Island Policy in the Greek Government.

Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues, Tone Tingsgaard

In her report, Tone Tingsgaard reminded Delegations of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which highlights the impact of war on women as well as women’s contributions to conflict resolution. Calling it a “cornerstone document,” Ms. Tingsgaard appealed to all participating States to put Resolution 1325 into practice.

Ms. Tingsgaard also pointed out that far fewer women than men receive seconded positions within the OSCE and encouraged the Delegations to take measures in order to ensure that this imbalance is addressed. Furthermore, she emphasized the necessity for the OSCE Gender Action Plan to be properly implemented. After all, Ms. Tingsgaard pointed out, all of the OSCE Institutions are headed by men and only two field operations are led by women.

“Women’s under-representation is not just a problem for women,” she said. “It is a challenge to the most fundamental principle of democracy.”

This is one of the main reasons that most

participating States have some form of gender quotas in place, she said. Some of these quotas are constitutional, some are legislative while others are party-based. She stressed that quotas alone are not sufficient and that working conditions must also be examined in order to ensure that women have equal opportunity to engage in parliamentary work.

Finally, the Special Representative observed that some OSCE PA Delegations were composed solely of men and announced that she has proposed a change to the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure that seeks to alter this imbalance. Specifically, her proposed rule would restrict the voting rights of Delegations made up exclusively of one gender.

The fact that a decision had been made to pass the proposal on to the Rules Committee for examination indicates that the Parliamentary Assembly remains dedicated to gender issues, Ms. Tingsgaard said.

During the debate, one delegate described how maternal mortality is a serious humanitarian issue, saying that roughly 1,500 women die daily during complications while giving birth. She also pointed out that most of these deaths have taken place in the developing world. She expressed her intention to put forward a Supplementary Item on this topic in Vilnius.

Another Delegate spoke in favour of the essence of Ms. Tingsgaard’s quota proposal, but pointed out that every effort had been made to include women MPs in his national Delegation but with no success. He said that he hoped a workable compromise might be possible in the Rules Committee.

Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



Special Presentation by Panos Kammenos, Vice Minister of Mercantile Marine, Aegean and Island Policy

The presentation by Panos Kammenos dealt with the relatively new phenomenon of piracy as a security threat, a subject of vital importance for the security of international navigation.

Since 1991, Mr. Kammenos explained, the unstable political situation in Somalia, as well as its civil wars and endemic poverty, have driven the country and its population into social and economic misery.

The dysfunctional nature of Somalia's government has opened doors for exploitation and scavenging of its maritime resources. Hundreds of fishing vessels from all over the world came to operate illegally in the territorial waters of Somalia.

These conditions facilitated the occurrence of pirate groups that are highly familiar with in the waters around Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. They are experienced in warfare and possess the necessary weaponry to attack at sea.

In 2008, Mr. Kammenos reported, 293 incidents of piracy had been recorded internationally and another 111 incidents recorded around the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden.

The consequences of piracy are far-reaching and have effects on different levels. The risk from piracy could harm important commercial routes that link the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean with the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Another important impact could be on the timely expedition



of humanitarian aid to Somalia, for instance by the World Food Programme. Impeded humanitarian aid could result in flows of starving refugees trying to leave the country and will bring economic instability to neighbouring States as well as an increase in illegal immigration to Europe.

The proliferation of incidents during the last two years has led a number of international bodies and organizations to sound the alarm. In particular the Council of the International Maritime Organization has been aggressively confronting the issue. The United Nations Security Council has also adopted a number of resolutions to address the problem.

Reports by the Chairs of the Three General Committees and Concluding Statement by the President of the OSCE PA

The Eighth Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA was brought to a close with brief remarks by the Chairs of the three General Committees, who summarized for the Joint Session the deliberations that took place in their respective Committees. Emphasis was placed on the plans of the Committee Rapporteurs in preparation for the upcoming Annual Session, which this year takes place in Vilnius, Lithuania from 29 June to 3 July.

OSCE PA President Joao Soares thanked all Delegations for participating in the Winter Meeting. He also gave special thanks to the OSCE Secretariat and the interpreters for the invaluable support they provided to the Assembly in holding the meeting.









**PROGRAMME OF THE EIGHTH WINTER MEETING OF
THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
Vienna, 19 – 20 February 2009**

Thursday, 19 February

09.00-11.30 **Standing Committee Meeting** (Ratsaal, 5th floor)

11.45-13.00 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** (Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)

- Call to Order by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. João Soares
- Opening Remarks by the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Ms. Barbara Prammer
 - Remarks by the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. John Tanner
 - Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. João Soares
 - Address by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Greek Foreign Minister Ms. Dora Bakoyannis, followed by a question/answer session

13.00-15.30 **Lunch break**

15.30-18.00 **General Committee on Political Affairs and Security** (Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)

15.30-18.00 **General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, technology and Environment** (Ratsaal, 5th floor)

18:15 Departure of buses from *Hofburg* to the Austrian Parliament

18.30 **Reception offered by the Austrian Parliament** (Austrian Nationalrat)

Friday, 20 February

09.00-12.00 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** (Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)

09.00-11.00 Special Debate on proposals for a new European Security Architecture

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

11.15-12.00 Special Presentation on the Preparations for the Kazakhstan Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010

12:00 **Reception offered by the Delegation of Kazakhstan** (Grosser Redoutensaal)

13.30-16.00 **General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions** (Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)

16.00-16.30 **Closing Joint Session of the three General Committees** (Neuer Saal 2nd floor)

- Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Ms. Tone Tingsgaard, followed by a debate
- "Piracy As a New Security Threat" Special Presentation by Mr. Panos Kammenos, Vice Minister of Mercantile Marine, Aegean & Island Policy, Greece
- Reports by the Chairs of the three General Committees
- Concluding statement by the President of the OSCE PA



Philippe Nobile



Secretary General
Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly, and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and has a permanent staff of 16, including two staff members at the liason office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Tina Schön



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Special
Representative
Andreas Nothelle



Presidential
Advisor
Andreas Baker



Director of
Communications
Klas Bergman



Assistant to the
Secretary General
Dana Bjerregaard



Liaison Officer
Marc Carillet



Programme
Officer
Anna Chernova



Senior Counsellor
Semyon Dzakhayev



Logistics Officer
Petra Jezkova



Conference
Co-ordinator
Odile LeLarge



Administrative
Director
Kurt Lerras



Senior Secretary
Connie Mathiesen



Research / Publi-
cations Officer
Nat Parry



IT-Supporter
Stephen Paul



The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is the parliamentary dimension of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The primary task of the 320 member Assembly is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue, an important aspect of the overall effort to meet the challenges of democracy throughout the OSCE area. Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, originally established by the 1990 Paris Summit to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, has grown into a very active and esteemed member of the OSCE family.

The basic objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States;
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly employs a variety of means:

- A Final Declaration and a number of resolutions and recommendations are adopted each year at the Annual Session in July;
- Committee work addresses important contemporary international issues;
- Programmes and Seminars designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions to areas of latent or active crisis.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

International Secretariat

Radhusstraede 1

1466 Copenhagen K

Denmark

Telephone: +45 33 37 80 40

Telefax: +45 33 37 80 30

E-mail: osce@oscepa.dk

Internet: www.oscepa.org