

Grossruck leads post-election visit to Azerbaijan



Bahar Muradova and Wolfgang Grossruck in Baku

PA Vice-President and Special Co-ordinator of the November 2010 OSCE Election Observation Mission in Azerbaijan Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria) led a post-election visit to Baku on 9-13 February. Meeting with representatives from parliament (Milli Mejlis) and government as well as with political parties and other representatives of civil society and the media, Mr. Grossruck discussed the post-election situation, the election report and future steps to be taken in order to further develop democracy in Azerbaijan.

In his talks, Mr. Grossruck reiterated the November 2010 post-election statement which he had delivered on behalf of the short term OSCE Observation Mission composed of the PA and the ODIHR. He explained that only a statement based on hearing all sides and not omitting any observations, whether positive or negative, is fair and guarantees the highest

credibility. He also urged the government to co-operate closely with the OSCE in addressing issues listed in the statement and to do its part to strengthen democracy by promoting a competitive opposition.

Vice-President Grossruck also promised to look into the recommendations made by the Chairman of the Musavat Party and the representatives of civil society for urgently needed improvements in ODIHR's election methodology.

Mr. Grossruck's interlocutors included Speaker of the Parliament Ogtay Asadov, Dep. Speaker and Head of the PA's Azerbaijani Delegation Bahar Muradova, Chairman of the Council of State Support to NGOs Azay Guliyev (MP), Dep. Foreign Minister Mahmud Ahmed Mammad-Guliyev, Chairman of the Central Election Commission Mazahir Panahov, Head of the OSCE Office in Baku, Amb. Bilge Cancorel, Austrian Ambassador Sylvia Meier-Kajbic. Mr. Grossruck also met with the Chairpersons of political parties – Ali Ahmedov (Yeni Azerbaijan), Isa Gambar (Musavat), Ali Karimli (Popular Front), Fazail Gazanfaroglu (Great Order) – as well as representatives of five NGOs and two newspapers.

The OSCE PA delegation also included Amb. Andreas Nothelle, PA Special Representative in Vienna, and Lukas Mussi from the Austrian Parliament. Mr. Grossruck is expected to report on the elections to the OSCE PA's Standing Committee meeting on 25 February in Vienna.

Briefing on election observation in Swedish Parliament

On the initiative of the Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag, Per Westerberg, the Swedish Parliament held a briefing on election observation on 9 February. Former OSCE PA Vice-President Tone Tingsgaard chaired the meeting, which was opened by Speaker Westerberg.

Some 40 Members of the Swedish Parliament participated in the briefing.

OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen and Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker served as keynote speakers, providing an overview of OSCE PA election observation activities. Several Members of the Swedish delegation to the Assembly, including Head of Delegation Walburga Habsburg Douglas and Asa Lindestam, also participated in the briefing, sharing their personal experiences from observing many elections over the years.

Parliamentary observation of elections in the OSCE was first encouraged by then Chairperson-in-Office, Swedish Foreign Minister Margaretha af Ugglas in 1993. Since that time, the Swedish Parliament has deployed 160 participants in OSCE PA observation missions.

Latvian and Swedish MPs visit Secretariat



Kent Harstedt, Ina Druviete and Iveta Grigule

Members of the Latvian and Swedish Delegations to the OSCE PA visited the International Secretariat on Monday 14 February and held meetings with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and other members of the staff. Parliamentarians Iveta Grigole and Ina Druviete from Latvia, and Kent Harstedt from Sweden, were briefed by the Secretary General on the current and upcoming activities of the Assembly including the Winter Meeting in Vienna, election observation missions and procedural matters pertaining to the Annual Session to be held in Belgrade. The Swedish and Latvian Secretaries of Delegation Ann-Sofi Lindenbaum and Igors Aizstrauts also participated in the visit which also included a meeting with the Assembly's team of research fellows.