

News from Copenhagen

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OSCE PA Moldova Committee Organizes Seminar on Self-Government

From 28 to 31 May 2001, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, in conjunction with the Parliament of Finland and the Åland Lagting, organised a seminar on self-government which took place in Helsinki and Mariehamn. Initiated by the OSCE PA Parliamentary Team on Moldova, the event not only gathered parliamentarians from nine countries (Canada, Finland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine) but also other high-level personalities from international and national institutions (UNMIK, PACE, the authorities of Åland Islands, as well as a number of diplomats). Most importantly, the seminar brought together those directly involved in the resolution of the conflict. A delegation from the Moldovan parliament, headed by Vice-Speaker Mr. Vadim Misin, as well as leaders from Transnistria, headed by Mr. Grigory Marakutsa, participated in the discussions as did the special governmental representatives on the Transnistrian issue from Russia and Ukraine. The OSCE Mission to Moldova was represented by Amb. William Hill, Head of the Mission.

The seminar brought together different parliamentarians and other political leaders to promote further dialogue and to examine models of self-government, especially the model of autonomy developed within Finland for the Åland Islands, with a view to finding solutions applicable to the crisis in Moldova. Among other themes, the relevance of the language issue in the case of Åland's autonomy provoked discussions on the situation in Moldova with Moldovan as the official language, but with Russian and



Ukrainian speaking minorities largely concentrated in Transnistria.

Ms. Riitta Uosukainen, Speaker of the Finnish Parliament and Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Foreign Minister of Finland, addressed the seminar during the opening session and Mr. Adrian Severin, President of the OSCE PA, presented his thoughts on the role of the international community during its closing session. The participants were also received by H.E. Mrs. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, in a meeting at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki. President Halonen is a former member of the OSCE PA.

The OSCE PA Parliamentary Team on Moldova, chaired by Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, MP (Finland), was also represented by Mr. Jerahmiel Grafstein, MP (Canada), Mr. Roberto Battelli, MP (Slovenia) and Mrs. Tone Tingsgård, MP (Sweden). The team was created in January 2000 with the main purpose of assisting in the reconciliation between the different parties involved and has, since its establishment, paid two visits to Chisinau and Tiraspol. The Transnistrian issue will also be addressed at the Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to be held in Paris in early July.

PA Delegation attends Human Dimension Seminar

On 29-31 May 2001, Mr. Kjell Engebretsen, MP (Norway) participated in the OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Seminar on Election Processes on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly. Mr. Engebretsen delivered a keynote speech during the closing plenary session in which he highlighted the role of national parliaments in the consolidation of democratic values. He emphasized in particular the importance of parliamentarians in election observation missions. Tina Schøn from the Secretariat participated in the Seminar, assisting as Rapporteur for two of the five working groups. Ms. Schøn reported to the closing plenary session on experiences of the OSCE in election organisation and monitoring, and listed a number of recommendations for future projects. She also reported on the working group that discussed democratic elections, rule of law and good governance – emphasising the need for transparency and measures against corruption.

Stability Pact Strengthens its Parliamentary Dimension

On 5 June 2001, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe agreed to sponsor the parliamentary dimension of the Stability Pact by creating a Parliamentary Troika covering all aspects and all Working Tables of the Stability Pact. Stability Pact Coordinator Bodo Hombach called the setting up of the Parliamentary Troika a “major step forward to a democratic underpinning of the Pact’s activities and a reflection of the constructive role parliaments and parliamentarians have played in the Pacts two years of existence.”

President Severin on Official Visit to Sweden

On May 28th, President Severin and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Secretary General R. Spencer Oliver met in Stockholm with Tone Tingsgård, Swedish M. P. and Head of the Swedish OSCE PA Delegation and other parliamentarians, including the Speaker of the House, Ms. Birgitta Dahl. President Severin also spoke to the leaders of the Swedish NGO Network and met with State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hans Dahlgren. During the meetings, President Severin criticised the secret consensus decision-making processes in the OSCE and called for more oversight, transparency and accountability in the Organization’s working methods. The Swedish Parliament also arranged for President Severin to be briefed by a representative of the Swedish National Audit Office, which had issued a highly critical report on the financial affairs of the OSCE during the calendar year 1999. The Audit Report in question has now been made available to the Assembly.