

News from Copenhagen

Number 66

Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

17 January 2003

Liason Office Opened in Vienna



President George welcomes OSCE Chairman-in-Office Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council Ambassador Justus de Visser, to the opening of the new OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Liaison Office in Vienna.

"We have to realize that the Organization - as important as it is - needs marketing ...MP's are all ambassadors for the OSCE and its values; advocating and promoting our ideals." said the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the reception celebrating the opening of the OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna. The reception, hosted by President Bruce George and Secretary General Spencer Oliver, was held in conjunction with the first meeting of the Permanent Council of the year as well as the annual Heads of Mission meeting. Austrian Foreign Minister, Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner also addressed the opening reception welcoming the Liaison Office as an important means to improve co-operation and co-ordination between the OSCE PA and the OSCE in Vienna. More than one hundred top Officials from the OSCE governmental structures, including Secretary General Jan Kubis, Ambassadors to the OSCE in Vienna, Heads of OSCE Institutions and field missions and senior officials of the OSCE Secretariat, attended. Vice-President Rita Süßmuth and the Deputy Secretary General of the German Bundestag were also present to greet the new office and Ambassador Andreas Nothelle who heads the Office.

OSCE Troika Meeting

President Bruce George participated in the OSCE Troika Meeting on 13 January in Vienna. The meeting was chaired by OSCE C-i-O, Dutch Foreign Minister Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and was attended by the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Bulgaria, the OSCE Secretary-General and the Heads of OSCE Institutions.

On topical issues, the agenda included the re-balancing of the three OSCE dimensions, trafficking in human beings, and co-ordination within the OSCE and with other international institutions. The participants also discussed regional issues, including the situation in Turkmenistan, Georgia, Moldova, Chechnya and Belarus. During the course of the discussion, President George informed the participants of OSCE PA initiatives in each of these areas. President George was accompanied by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Special Representative Andreas Nothelle, and Programme Officer Paul LeGendre.

President Bruce George attends Heads of Mission meeting in Vienna

In Vienna, from 13-14 January 2003, President Bruce George addressed the meeting of OSCE Heads of Mission, expressing the Assembly's strong support for the work done by the OSCE Mission in the field. He also briefed the Heads of Mission on the upcoming meetings of the OSCE PA and the field related activities of OSCE parliamentarians. The President as well as representatives of the International Secretariat discussed co-operation and future projects including future field visits, activities of Ad Hoc Committees and election monitoring projects in regional group meetings. Heads of Mission expressed a strong interest in continuing and strengthening the co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and indicated that they highly valued the visits and activities of the PA in the field.

European Parliament takes over the Presidency of the Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact

Mrs. Rita Süßmuth (Germany), Vice-President of the OSCE PA, attended the meeting of the Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which was held in Strasbourg on 14 January 2003. In the meeting the European Parliament took over the rotating Presidency of the Troika from the Council of Europe PA. The Parliamentary Troika is composed of the OSCE PA, Council of Europe PA and the European Parliament.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Elmar Brok, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. Other participants included Mr. Peter Schieder, President of the Council of Europe PA and Dr. Erhard Busek, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact.

At the meeting the European Parliament introduced its plans and suggestions concerning the future work of the Troika. It was decided that the Third Parliamentary Conference on the Stability Pact will take place in Brussels on 21-22 May 2003. The Troika also agreed with the proposal, which had been made by Mr. Bruce George, President of the OSCE PA, that the rotating Presidency of the Troika would last for one whole calendar year, instead of the previous practice of 6 months. This means that the OSCE PA will take over the Presidency for 2004, and the Council of Europe PA for 2005.

For further information contact Mr. Pentti Väänänen, Deputy Secretary General, who accompanied Mrs. Süßmuth at the meeting.