

News from Copenhagen



On 7 July in Brussels, Göran Lennmarker was elected as the eighth President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

President Lennmarker visits International Secretariat

On 11 July, Göran Lennmarker paid his first visit as President of the OSCE PA to the Assembly headquarters in Copenhagen. President Lennmarker met with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Deputy Secretaries General Tina Schøn and Vitaly Evseyev and other staff.

The President was in Copenhagen to discuss his priorities and upcoming activities of the Assembly, including election observation missions, and the Autumn Meetings in Malta.

President Lennmarker has visited the International Secretariat several times before in conjunction with his work in the Assembly.

Focus on election-related matters during Annual Session

During the PA's Annual Session in Brussels, parliamentarians repeatedly stressed the important role played by elected officials in OSCE election observation missions.

On the opening day of the Session, the PA leadership and guest speakers highlighted the importance of this topic.

Former President Alcee L. Hastings opened the 15th Annual Session by reminding Members of the "unique expertise and unmatched credibility" that parliamentarians bring to observation missions. He called for further strengthening of the role of parliamentarians within this field.

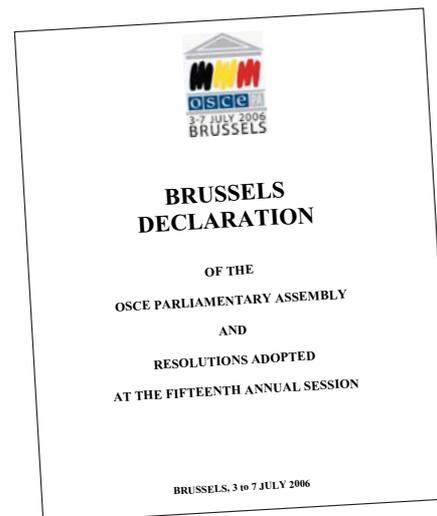
The hosts of the Session in Brussels, the Presidents of the Belgian House of Representatives and of the Senate, continued the calls for a strong parliamentary role in election observation. Herman De Croo noted the relevance of Assembly work in this field, and also stressed the importance of applying uniform standards when making these assessments. Senate President Anne-Marie Lizin called on Members to "stay proud of the parliamentary role in monitoring elections", while seeking a good equilibrium in working with the OSCE/ODIHR.

On the same issue, the Chair-in-Office of the OSCE, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, noted that "parliamentarians in general, and this Assembly in particular, have a key role to play and offer an invaluable contribution based on their personal experience as elected officials."

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, René Van Der Linden, remarked that "It goes without saying that parliamentarians are best placed to take care of the political aspects of observations, thus complementing ODIHR's efforts that mostly focus on more technical areas."

In the Brussels Declaration, passed unanimously by the Assembly on 7 July, the parliamentarians called on the PA "to continue to provide political leadership to the OSCE Election Observation Missions". The Declaration also takes note of the political expertise and credibility brought to election observation missions by elected parliamentarians.

Since the Assembly first began its election observation programme, following the request of then Chair-in-Office, Swedish Foreign Minister Baroness Margaretha af Ugglas, over 2200 parliamentarians have been deployed across the OSCE to monitor 78 elections.



Upcoming Elections

The Parliamentary Assembly is making preparations to deploy election observation missions to the upcoming parliamentary elections in **Montenegro, 10 September 2006** and the general elections in **Bosnia and Herzegovina, scheduled for 1 October 2006**.

The International Secretariat will distribute further information to all OSCE PA Delegations in the near future.