

OSCE PA President urges stabilization of election legislation in Ukraine



Joao Soares, Oleh Bilorus and Yulia Tymoshenko



Viktor Yanukovich and Joao Soares



Viktor Yuschenko and Joao Soares

Concluding a two day visit to Kyiv, 2 to 4 November, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Joao Soares called on the Ukrainian authorities to finalize reforms of the electoral legislation in advance of the upcoming Presidential election on 17 January 2010.

“Ongoing struggles over the election legislation have left the Ukrainian people, candidates and authorities unsettled in advance of the January election. Clarity is absolutely vital if the upcoming election is to proceed smoothly and if the voters are to have confidence in the system,” said President Soares.

The visit to Kyiv was undertaken to continue preparations for the OSCE PA’s observation of the 2010 Presidential election, which President Soares will personally lead. The visit included meetings with the Central Election Commission Chairman Volodimir Shapoval and with presidential candidates including the incumbent President Viktor Yuschenko; Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko; Chairman of the Parliament Volodymyr Lytvyn; and Viktor Yanukovich; Inna Bogoslovska; Anatoliy Hrytsenko; and Arseniy Yatseniuk.

Mr. Soares also met with representatives of the Supreme

Court, media and civil society, including domestic observer groups.

The OSCE PA President expressed his hope that the upcoming campaign would enable all candidates to campaign freely on an equal basis, and that the election would be conducted in a transparent manner. He underlined the importance of effective and careful implementation of the new State Voter Register, particularly in regard to any addition of voters to voter lists on election day.

“I was pleased,” he said, “to hear about the planned training of election commissions members, including by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. However, important programmes such as this are complicated by the continuing uncertainty of legislation regulating the election.”

The OSCE PA observation mission will work closely with other observers, including from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and other parliamentary bodies. Mr. Soares was accompanied on the trip by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen and Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker.

OSCE PA participates in security seminar in Sarajevo

The PA was represented at the OSCE Seminar on the Code of Conduct on Politico Military Aspects of Security, held from 2 to 5 November in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, by OSCE PA Treasurer and Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), and the Rapporteur of the First Committee Riccardo Migliori (Italy).

The Seminar, entitled “The Implementation of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico Military Aspects of Security in South Eastern Europe,” dealt with issues such as security sector reform and confidence and security building in South East Europe.

Mr. Migliori made a presentation on the mechanisms and procedures for parliamentary control over armed forces and police and security forces, drawing particular attention to

private military and security companies. These companies pose a unique challenge, Mr. Migliori said, because of the absence of international guidelines to regulate them and the lack of parliamentary oversight of their activities.

Mr. Battelli focused on the activities of the OSCE PA in promoting democratic control of armed and security forces, underlining the importance of parliamentarians acting as safeguards to avoid misuse of armed forces as well as exercise democratic scrutiny over the military.

The four day event was hosted by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and was co-organized by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the governments of Austria and Switzerland. Mr. Battelli and Mr. Migliori were accompanied by Programme Officer Roberto Montella.