

**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE (18 to 25 January)****Chairman-in-Office reacts to invitation to observe presidential elections in Belarus**

BRUSSELS, 19 January – Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht welcomed the letter from Belarus Foreign Minister Sergei Martinov inviting the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR/OSCE) to send election observers for the presidential elections on 19 March.

The OSCE Chairman expects to see the Belarus authorities guarantee that all eligible candidates will be allowed to register and that the elections will be free and fair, including access to the media for all candidates.

**Chairman-in-Office presents condolences on the death of Kosovo's PISG President Ibrahim Rugova**

BRUSSELS, 21 January – Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht presented his condolences to the people of Kosovo and to the family of PISG President Rugova, on hearing the news of his death.

The Chairman-in-Office said he hoped the President's death, coming at a sensitive moment, would not diminish prospects for a lasting solution in Kosovo. He also reiterated the OSCE's intent to provide firm support for the process under way.

**OSCE Chairmanship's Special Envoy opens the 14th OSCE Economic Forum, devoted to transport**

VIENNA, 23 January – Senator Pierre Chevalier, Special Envoy of the Chairman-in-Office, opened the 14th OSCE Economic Forum. The event brought together about 300 high-level representatives from 55 OSCE States and from other international organisations.

Transport is the theme chosen by the Belgian Chairmanship to give new momentum to the economic dimension as a vector of security and stability at both regional and international level.

Strengthening of the economic dimension of the OSCE, said Pierre Chevalier, must also be approached through closer collaboration with other international organisations, such as the European Union and the United Nations.

**OSCE Chairman-in-Office meets the leader of Nagorno-Karabakh**

EREVAN, 24 January – Arriving in Erevan, Armenia, Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht met the leader of Nagorno-Karabakh, Arkady Ghukassian, to discuss the prospects for a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**OSCE Chairman-in-Office meets Armenian Foreign Minister**

EREVAN, 24 January – Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht met Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian for an exchange of views on the prospects for a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**OSCE Chairman-in-Office meets Armenian President Robert Kocharian**

TSAKHKADZOR, 25 January - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht met Armenian President Robert Kocharian to discuss the prospects for a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabach conflict.

## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

BAKU, 25 January - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht is to meet Azeri authorities: President Ilham Aliyev, Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov, and also the Representative of the Azeri community in Nagorno-Karabakh, Nizami Bahmanov

MOSCOW, 26 January - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht is to meet Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov