



Remembering Anna Politkovskaya

Spencer Oliver, Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's International Secretariat, attended the funeral and memorial service for Anna Politkovskaya on 10 October. He shared this account with the *OSCE Magazine*.

MOSCOW, 10 October 2006 — "Heaven is weeping," remarked one of Anna Politkovskaya's colleagues from *Novaya Gazeta* as we stood in the rain. Lined up four or five abreast for over a mile, thousands of Russians from all walks of life had come to pay their respects to the murdered journalist.

Despite the masses of people, the silence was only broken by the shuffling of feet as mourners filed past the casket. It seemed that everybody had brought a tribute to Ms. Politkovskaya, from single roses to large floral arrangements. The entire area was soon covered with flowers.

In a memorial hall filled with hundreds of people, the editors of *Novaya Gazeta* had kindly arranged a prominent place for

me, as representative of the OSCE, which had awarded Ms. Politkovskaya its Prize for Journalism and Democracy in February 2003.

Several moving memorials were given. Ms. Politkovskaya's friends and colleagues spoke of her fearless character and devotion to her work. Others, including representatives of government and the diplomatic community, spoke of the impact that this gross crime would have on the media and civil society in Russia.

The service was a moving ceremony and testimony to a courageous life. In her own humble yet strong manner, Anna Politkovskaya perhaps gave the most fitting memorial herself three years ago when she addressed the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna:

I'm neither a politician nor a diplomat. And so I'm not polite — I say what I think.

And what I think about is what I see with my own eyes. My job is simple: to look around and to write what I see.

Photo courtesy of
Novaya Gazeta