

News from Copenhagen

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OSCE PA Special Representative Nothelle addresses Permanent Council

On July 22 2003, the Special Representative of the PA in Vienna, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, briefed the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) of the OSCE Permanent Council on the results of the PA Annual Session in Rotterdam, which had taken place from July 5 through 9. He highlighted a substantial number of the recommendations and considerations forming part of the Rotterdam Declaration and the resolutions on the supplementary items. Two days later he also briefed the Permanent Council. Only four countries responded, although substantive discussion did

not take place. The representatives of the USA and the Russian Federation underlined the great importance they and their parliaments attach to the work of the Assembly and highlighted some of the contributions their parliamentarians had made. The Belarussian Ambassador complained that their parliamentary delegation had not been treated fairly and also criticised the supplementary item on Belarus, which was adopted in Rotterdam. He said that the resolution on Belarus contained a substantial number of misconceptions, to which his government would have to respond.

Vice-President Kessler pays election follow-up visit to Armenia

OSCE PA Vice-President Giovanni Kessler, who served as Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the Armenian parliamentary elections on 25 May 2003 paid a two-day follow-up visit to Yerevan from 21-22 July together with Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of the OSCE/ODIHR.

The joint visit was organized to engage in dialogue with the Armenian authorities following the presentation of the Preliminary Statement on the day after the election.

The overall preliminary conclusion of the International Election Observation Mission, which included observers from the OSCE PA, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the OSCE/ODIHR, was that although the 25 May parliamentary elections marked an improvement over the February 2003 Presidential election in the campaign and media coverage, they fell short of international standards for democratic elections in a number of key areas, including the falsification of vote counts, intimidation of observers and proxies, and violation of secrecy of the ballot during military voting.

During the follow-up visit, Mr. Kessler and Ambassador Strohal called on the authorities and political parties to commence a credible process of electoral reform to improve the conduct of future elections. They stressed the need to carry out the necessary legislative and administrative reforms immediately and urged the authorities to give a clear sign of their determination to meet international commitments for democratic elections.

Mr. Kessler was accompanied by Programme Officer Tina Schøn from the International Secretariat.



OSCE Head of Office, Ambassador Roy Reeve; PA Vice-President Giovanni Kessler; and ODIHR Director Christian Strohal, meet with the Armenia Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vartan Oskanian

3+3 Meets in Strasbourg

Senior Officials from the OSCE and the Council of Europe met in Strasbourg on 11 July as '3+3' to exchange information and to co-ordinate the activities of the two institutions. The OSCE PA was represented by Mr. Pentti Väänänen, Deputy Secretary General. Other OSCE representatives included Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, Director of the Conflict Prevention Center, and representatives of the OSCE Chairmanship. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Klaus Schumann, Director General of Political Affairs of the Council of Europe.

During the meeting Mr. Väänänen informed the meeting about the PA's activities in Armenia, Belarus and Moldova.

A high-level 3+3 meeting will take place later in 2003.



OSCE PA Vice-President Alcee Hastings, traveling with a US Congressional delegation led by US Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, stopped by the International Secretariat in Copenhagen to discuss preparations for the Annual PA Session in 2005, which will be held in Washington, DC.