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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE (2 March - 8 March)

Rupel Calls on UN Security Council to Utilise OSCE

NEW YORK - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel called on the UN Security Council to put the OSCE to use as he addressed the body on 4 March. Minister Rupel stressed his visit was aimed at finding out what the OSCE could do for the UN. He reiterated that the OSCE's best asset was conflict prevention, while it could also help resolve conflicts. Rupel also outlined the current priorities of Slovenia's chairmanship in reforming the organisation: "I see this process as an opportunity more than a crisis. I believe that challenges to the OSCE's relevance and strategic direction have shaken some states out of their complacency and brought out into the open some issues that had been festering below the surface for some time."

Kosovo Dominates Rupel's Meeting with Annan

NEW YORK - The future of Kosovo topped talks between OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at UN headquarters on 4 March. The pair discussed Kosovo at length, including the forthcoming report on the implementation of standards in the province. Talks on Kosovo's future could begin after the presentation of this report, said Rupel. He also acquainted Annan with several Slovenian initiatives, adding that Slovenia was well positioned to contribute ideas as it had extensive experience in SE Europe. We agreed that the UN and the OSCE could help each other, Rupel said. He also reiterated his view that both the OSCE and the UN needed to undertake reforms.

Rupel Travels to Washington for Meeting with Rice

WASHINGTON - Continuing his visit to the US, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel has travelled from New York to Washington, where he met US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice on 7 March. Rupel is also scheduled to meet Robert Bradtke, the Assistant State Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs. Prior to his meetings with State Department officials, Rupel is to speak about the situation in the Western Balkans at the US Institute of Peace and present OSCE priorities to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. On the second day of his stay in Washington, Rupel is to address the Helsinki Commission of the US Congress.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WASHINGTON, 7 & 8 MARCH - The OSCE Chair Dimitrij Rupel continues his visit to the United States, meeting US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice and addressing the Helsinki Commission of the US Congress.

KIEV, 10 & 11 MARCH - Third Preparatory Seminar for the 13th OSCE Economic Forum, entitled "Integrating persons belonging to national minorities", is scheduled to take place.

CHISINAU, 14 MARCH - The OSCE Chair Dimitrij Rupel is to visit Moldova.