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## **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE (16 March - 22 March)**

### **Rupel Pledges Support for Serbia's European Aspirations**

LJUBLJANA - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel pledged that the OSCE and Slovenia would continue to promote activities for stability and prosperity in the Western Balkans as he met Serbian President Boris Tadic on 18 March. Rupel stressed that stability in Serbia-Montenegro and Kosovo was in the interest of Slovenia and the whole of the region. Slovenia will offer Serbia all the assistance it can give in order to help it achieve its goals.

### **OSCE Chair Calls for Removal of Units from Transdnister**

CHISINAU & TIRASPOL - The precondition for the resolution of the Transdnister issue is the withdrawal of weapons and units from the area, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel said after talks with Moldovan officials and representatives of the self-proclaimed Transdnister republic on 14 March. "We want to find the best format for the solution of the Transdnister issue," Rupel told the press. He said his hosts voiced the idea that a breakthrough could be achieved with a new document on the issue. The paper, which Rupel said needed to be examined closely, would also be brought up in talks with Russia. Rupel also said that he urged his hosts in Tiraspol not to take unilateral measures. Rupel met Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin and Foreign Minister Andrej Stratan in Chisinau before heading to Tiraspol for talks with Transdnister leader Igor Smirnov.

### **OSCE Committed to Human Rights, Rupel Tells UN Commission**

GENEVA - The OSCE is determined in its fight against intolerance and discrimination, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel underscored in his address to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva on 15 March. "In order to firmly embed basic human rights in our societies, we have to raise awareness among the youth. The Slovenian OSCE chairmanship will therefore dedicate special attention to human rights education," Rupel told the assembly. In its political and security dimension, the OSCE insists on the preservation of fundamental human rights principles even when facing security challenges, according to Rupel.

### **Rupel Calls on all Parties in Kyrgyzstan to Refrain from Using Force**

LJUBLJANA - The OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel urged all sides to engage in a dialogue to defuse the tension over the post-election situation in Kyrgyzstan. "Violence can never be justified. Recent events in Jalal Abad and Osh might lead to an escalation of violence and have a negative effect on the political situation and stability in the country," he added. He called on all parties to refrain from using force in addressing electoral and political disputes, to abide by the rule of law and to respect fundamental principles of human and civil rights. In his opinion, both the authorities of Kyrgyzstan and the opposition should begin a constructive dialogue to assess the current situation and identify ways to overcome differences within the framework provided by the law. The Chairman-in-Office offered the support of the OSCE to facilitate such dialogue and said that his Personal Representative for Central Asia Alojz Peterle stands ready to travel to Kyrgyzstan in order to assist in bringing about a peaceful solution to current situation.

### **OSCE Envoy Peterle Visits Central Asia**

DUSHANBE & BISHKEK - Alojz Peterle, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative for the OSCE States in Central Asia, paid visits to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan between 16 and 18 March. In Tajikistan, Peterle attended a regular meeting of heads of OSCE missions in the region, while in Kyrgyzstan he discussed the prospects for the region with Kyrgyz officials.

### **OSCE Chair Shocked by Attack on Kosovo Leader**

GENEVA - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel said he was distressed by news that the convoy of Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova had been the target of a bomb attack on 15 March in Pristina. "On behalf of the entire OSCE I fully condemn what appears to be a deliberate attack on the elected leader of Kosovo at such a sensitive time," Rupel said. He welcomed the peaceful manner in which the people of Kosovo have faced the recent events and urged them to do the same in the future.