

President Bruce George Visits Poland

President Bruce George visited the Polish Sejm and Senate on 8-9 September 2003. During the visit, he held talks with Marshal of the Senate, Mr. Longin Pastusiak; Marshal of the Sejm, Mr. Marek Borowski; Head of the Polish Delegation to the OSCE PA, Mr. Ryszard Zbrzyzny, and other Members of the Polish Delegation; and also with a number of other Polish parliamentarians. The President also met with the Foreign Minister of Poland, Mr. Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, and the Deputy Secretary of State of the Ministry of Defence, Mr. Andrzej Towpik.

The discussions dealt with a large number of issues, including the situation in Belarus. The Polish representatives expressed their special interest in the developments in Belarus, which is Poland's neighbour and has a large Polish minority. The President explained the OSCE PA's policies and the work of the PA's ad hoc Committee on Belarus. Both sides hoped that Belarus would not isolate itself and that the PA could help in bringing about necessary reforms in the country.

The discussions also dealt with the challenges faced by the OSCE and the international situation in light of the crisis in Iraq. The Polish side, which had just sent troops to Iraq, explained its aims and policies. President George, who is also the Chair of the



President Bruce George meets with Marshal of the Sejm, Mr. Marek Borowski.

Defence Committee of the British House of Commons, gave his views on Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

The Polish Delegation to the OSCE PA expressed its willingness to participate actively in monitoring several of the forthcoming elections.

During his visit, President George was accompanied by the Deputy Secretary General, Pentti Väänänen; Presidential Adviser, Gustavo Pallares; and President's Assistant, Sharon Crossland.

Working Visit to ODIHR

During his visit to Poland, President Bruce George paid a working visit to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw on 8 September. He met with Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of ODIHR; Mr. Steven Wagenseil, Deputy Director; Heads of different sections and several other representatives of the Institution.

During the discussions the representatives of the ODIHR introduced their

activities. The discussions also dealt with co-ordination and co-operation between the OSCE PA and the ODIHR. In particular, co-operation in election monitoring was discussed in detail. It was felt that the present co-operation, based on an agreement between the two institutions and on developed practices, is working well. At the same time, there is a need to develop further activities in pre-election assessments and, in particular, in following up the findings and recommendations of the election monitoring missions. Preparations of a number of forthcoming election monitoring missions, such as Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia, were also discussed.

The President was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General, Pentti Väänänen; Presidential Adviser, Gustavo Pallares; and President's Assistant, Sharon Crossland.



Vice-President Giovanni Kessler at Stability Pact Troika

Vice-President Giovanni Kessler (Italy) represented the OSCE PA at a meeting of the Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which took place in Strasbourg on 4 September 2003.

The agenda of the meeting included preliminary discussions on the Troika's activities in 2004 when the OSCE PA will hold the Presidency.

The Parliamentary Troika on the Stability Pact is composed of the OSCE PA, the Council of Europe PA and the European Parliament. The European Parliament holds the Presidency of the Troika in 2003. The Troika provides the Stability Pact with a Parliamentary dimension. Vice-President Kessler was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen.

Heads of Mission Meeting in Tbilisi

On 9 and 10 September 2003, Programme Officer Tina Schön attended the regional Heads of Mission Meeting for the Caucasus, which was held in Tbilisi, Georgia. In addition to the regional Heads of Missions, representatives from the OSCE Chairmanship, the Secretariat as well as other OSCE Institutions

were present. The discussion focussed mainly on the upcoming elections in Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as the post election situation in Armenia. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will send Members to observe the elections both in Azerbaijan and Georgia.