

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS
PORTUGAL, 9 OCTOBER 2001**

The International Secretariat has been very active during the nearly three months that have passed since our Tenth Annual Session in Paris. Although most parliaments were not in session during that period of time and many of our staff took their holidays during this period, we have been engaged in follow-up and other activities, including a major effort related to the monitoring of elections in Belarus. The Final Declaration and Resolutions passed in Paris were forwarded to all members of the OSCE Ministerial Council in accordance with our Rules of Procedure, as well as to members of the Permanent Council, the press and various NGOs and academic institutions. You have received in the mail, as well as in documents distributed here, the Report/Brochure on the Annual Session which gives a good overview of what took place in Paris.

The election monitoring project in Belarus was substantial, including preliminary visits by Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen and Paul LeGendre from the International Secretariat. Nearly fifty parliamentarians were present, as well as twenty parliamentarians from the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen, Programme Officer Paul LeGendre and Press and Public Affairs Counsellor Jan Jooren provided organisational and staff support for our team in co-ordination with staff from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the ODIHR. President Severin also participated in the election monitoring project. You will have received a copy of the statement that was issued and you will hear from Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen, who led the OSCE election monitoring effort, having been appointed as the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to lead the election monitoring mission.

President Severin made an appearance at the Permanent Council in Vienna in late August and shared his views about the role of the Parliamentary Assembly with the representatives of the governments of the Participating States. His speech is available along with other documents on the tables. He was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen and Presidential Adviser Gustavo Pallares. They also participated the next day in a special Permanent Council working group to discuss proposals for strengthening the OSCE.

In early September President Severin spent a week in Copenhagen on a working visit to the International Secretariat. During his visit, President Severin also visited the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims. He also met with our team of Research Fellows as well as individual members of the staff to discuss their areas of responsibility, particularly those who are in charge of the areas which he expects to visit in the next few months. This was the fourth such working visit that President Severin has made to the International Secretariat. He also attended a meeting on the Stability Pact in Brussels in mid-September and had several bilateral meetings, including with EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana. He was accompanied by Presidential Adviser Gustavo Pallares. As I reported in Paris, Mr. Severin has been a particularly active President. His extensive activities and travels have been supported by virtually all the substantive members of the staff of the International Secretariat, as well as our Research Team. The staff has organised most of his visits and meetings, providing Talking Points and draft Speeches for his various activities.

I should also say that a great amount of staff time has been devoted to assisting with the organisation of meetings, particularly the Conference on Migration which will take place here during the next two days. Our Portuguese hosts have provided us with

a magnificent setting and an excellent facility for our deliberations. They are very efficient and generous hosts. Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev, who is in charge of organising our meetings, has done a superb job putting together the programme for the Conference and I am sure it will provide a very interesting exchange of views. Gina Dark, our Conference Co-ordinator, has, of course, done most of the detailed work and logistics and has also done an outstanding job. I regret to inform you that Gina will be leaving the International Secretariat in a few weeks to take a new and challenging job in Paris. She will be difficult to replace, not only because of her energy and cheerful efficiency, but because she has also maintained fluency in three languages and has become well-known to the Secretaries of Delegations with whom she has worked closely for nearly three years. We will truly miss her presence in the Secretariat.

Three members of the International Secretariat – Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen, Programme Officer Tina Schøn and Programme Officer Paul LeGendre – participated in the ODIHR Human Dimension meeting which took place in Warsaw from the 17th to the 27th of September. Each of them actively participated in the sessions during their presence in Warsaw and held a number of meetings on the periphery with various NGOs, who were among the main participants in the Review Meeting. Our staff general conclusion, however, was that the value of these annual review meetings is becoming increasingly questionable due to the lack of high-level participation from governments and the fact that several NGOs have expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of follow-up to ODIHR review meetings.

As I predicted in my report to the Annual Session in Paris, we have had some difficulties with the OSCE Structures in Vienna as a reaction to the establishment of the Assembly's new ad hoc committee on transparency and accountability, as well as President Severin's continuing campaign to correct the democratic deficit in the OSCE

and provide more openness, transparency and accountability in its Institutions. You have received copies of President Severin's speeches in both Paris and at the Permanent Council. They reflect the positions that he, his predecessors, and the Assembly have taken during the past few years. Some difficulties and apprehensions were understandably reflected in the relations between the International Secretariat in Copenhagen and the Secretariat in Vienna. Although we had always previously had a very good working relationship with Secretary General Kubiš, as well as with his predecessors, the attention drawn by President Severin to the unfavourable Audit Reports of 1999 and 2000 caused a very critical and defensive reaction in Vienna. Last week, however, I accepted an invitation from Secretary General Kubiš to meet with him in Vienna to try to put the misunderstandings behind us and to find ways to bring about improved communication and co-operation in the future. Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen and I spent a full day in Vienna, including more than five hours with Secretary General Kubiš, as well as with the Chairman and other members of the Permanent Council. We had what could be described as a full and frank exchange of views, including a written response to letters and statements about our International Secretariat which had previously been circulated to the Permanent Council by Secretary General Kubiš. He fully understood the need for a written response and duly circulated our response to the Permanent Council in Vienna at the conclusion of our meetings. Pentti and I believe that these were useful meetings and that we have now cleared the air and have opened the way for productive and fruitful co-operation in the months ahead. That is not to say that there will not be some difficulties in the future, because there continues to be – at least among several Ambassadors on the Permanent Council – great resistance to the Assembly's efforts to correct the democratic deficit in the OSCE and to provide more openness, transparency and accountability in its Institutions. I am sure that that will continue to be a subject of discussions and negotiation between the governmental and parliamentary sides of the OSCE in the future.

Finally, let me say that we have been somewhat preoccupied during the past several weeks with our annual effort to ensure that the finances of the Assembly are in good order and that our expenditures remain within the budget approved by the Standing Committee. As I have reported in the past, we generally wait until September, the last month of the fiscal year, to determine how much equipment, particularly computers, can be replaced without exceeding our budgetary limits. You will receive a full report from the Treasurer. Both he and I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have about financial matters, but I can tell you that once again we will be within the budget, having spent approximately 98% of the assessed income for the last fiscal year. The Treasurer's Report will explain how we did that and provide some detailed numbers for your information.

In conclusion, let me say how pleased we have been with the co-operation we have received from the Members of the Bureau and of the Standing Committee, as well as with – in particular – the Secretaries of national Delegations with whom we work on a regular basis to serve the needs and the mandates of the Assembly. The International Secretariat now has fourteen permanent staff members and ten short-term Research Fellows, bringing up the total staffing of the Secretariat to twenty-four, four times the number that we started with in 1993 and 1994. The budget, however, has only less than doubled during that period of time, due not only to the efficient work of our staff, but also due to the generosity of the Danish Folketing, as well as substantial assistance from the Dutch and British Parliaments. I am quite proud of the staff and the professional manner in which they carry out their work. I am distributing, for your information, a staff directory which gives you some information about each staff member, as well as the areas of responsibility which have been delegated to each of them.