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REPORT
OF
THE SECRETARY GENERAL

ROTTERDAM, 5 TO 9 JULY 2003

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
TO THE TWELFTH ANNUAL SESSION
ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS JULY 2003**

SUMMARY

As we convene the Twelfth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I am pleased to report to you that the Assembly has continued its dynamic growth and that the International Secretariat continues to function well and efficiently in support of the expanded activities of the Organization. Since the conclusion of the Annual Session in Berlin last year, we have inaugurated several new programmes and meetings that have substantially increased the activity level of the Assembly.

The International Secretariat continues to operate within the bounds of the annual budget approved by the Standing Committee. Although the number of activities has substantially increased. This year, for example, we held the Winter Meeting in Vienna in February, the Sub-Regional Economic Conference in Bern in May, the Trans Asian Parliamentary Forum in Almaty in June and now this Annual Session here in Rotterdam. The permanent staff of fourteen in Copenhagen and two in Vienna continues to be supplemented by our very successful Research Fellow programme which helps the Secretariat to do quality research and to maintain a capability in all six official OSCE languages, as well as to support and organise these additional events.

STANDING COMMITTEE AND CONFERENCE

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, in conjunction with the Parliament of Spain, held a Standing Committee meeting and Conference on the Mediterranean in October of 2002. For the first time, the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Jan Kubis, briefed the Standing Committee on the proposed OSCE budget within days of its distribution in Vienna. The meeting was highly successful with more than one hundred and fifty parliamentarians participating and has led to the creation of an annual one day meeting on the Mediterranean to be held in conjunction with the Standing Committee and Conference each October. The Italian Parliament has graciously offered to host the next meeting in October.

WINTER MEETING

The Second Winter Meeting, which was held in Vienna on 20 – 21 February, was an outstanding success, with an even higher level of participation than last year. The Joint Session of the three General Committees was addressed by the President of Austria, Mr. Thomas Klestil, the Speaker of the Austrian Nationalrat, Mr. Andreas Khol, the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Ján Kubis, and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dutch Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaap Hoop de Scheffer. The three General Committees were addressed by high-ranking officials from the OSCE, including the Chairman of the Permanent Council, the Chairman of the Forum for Security Cooperation as well as some Heads of OSCE Missions and Heads of OSCE Institutions. The Rapporteurs of the Committees also presented their preliminary ideas for the Reports and Resolutions to be considered in Berlin. On the request of President Bruce George, a vigorous debate was also held on the situation in Iraq. For the first time, the OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy was awarded at the Winter Meeting. This year's recipient was Ms. Anna Politkovskaya of Russia who has reported extensively on the war in Chechnya.

RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENTAL SIDE OF THE OSCE

The International Secretariat has continued to work closely with the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, as well as the other OSCE Institutions, on the broad range of OSCE activities. The presence of the Special Representative in Vienna has increased the flow of information between the various Secretariats, although some improvements still need to be made to bring the Vienna Office up to the level of its potential.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President, Mr. Bruce George, addressed the Porto OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting immediately following the Chairman-in-Office. Several Members of the Bureau joined Mr. George for the Ministerial Council meeting. As in previous years, a meeting of the Bureau was held immediately preceding the Ministerial Council meeting.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continued to interact with the governmental side through participation in OSCE Ministerial Troika Meetings, other OSCE Troika Meetings, meetings of the "3+3" with the Council of Europe, the annual OSCE Economic Forum, OSCE Terrorism Conference, the OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Meeting, Regional Heads of Missions Meetings and the Public Affairs Roundtables.

One of the most significant events of the past year was the opening of our Liaison Office in Vienna, headed by Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, whom many of you know in his previous position as Secretary of the German Delegation. I would like to express our gratitude to the German Bundestag, who have seconded Ambassador Nothelle to this position. Unfortunately the Liaison Office is not functioning as we had hoped, in that there is resistance among some of the Ambassadors in the Permanent Council for Ambassador Nothelle to attend certain meetings, such as the informal Financial Committee. This is a departure from past practice and has been the cause of some increased tension between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE. We hope that this situation will soon change.

RELATIONS WITH OSCE FIELD MISSIONS

Representatives of the International Secretariat have regularly attended and participated in meetings of the OSCE Heads of Missions. Their participation has been greatly appreciated at such meetings, and is a useful means of forging contacts and making arrangements for the OSCE Field Mission Visits by Parliamentary Assembly delegations, which have been highly successful. The Heads of Missions appreciate the interest and assistance that OSCE parliamentarians offer, and it is useful for the parliamentarians to see at first hand the tremendous work that is being carried out in these Missions, often under politically sensitive and sometimes hazardous conditions. Parliamentarians have joined visits to the OSCE missions in Kyrgyzstan, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia. Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen, who is responsible for the Balkans, assisted by Programme Officer Alexander Staun-Rechnitzer, and Programme Officer Paul LeGendre, who has responsibility for Central Asia in the International Secretariat, have all worked intensively with the relevant OSCE Missions to ensure the success of these visits, and have travelled with the delegations during the visits.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continues to work closely with other parliamentary assemblies, particularly the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS IPA), and the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU). OSCE Parliamentary Assembly representatives have participated in various Joint Sessions, conferences and meetings, as well as co-operating in election monitoring projects. The President of the Assembly addressed the Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of

the Council of Europe In January. Regular contact and close co-operation is maintained with the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as well as with the leadership of the Secretariats of the other inter-parliamentary bodies.

In addition, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has cooperated with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament as a Tri-Parliamentary Troika to support the implementation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe as well as working together in Belarus and on election monitoring projects. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will hold the chairmanship of the Stability Pact Troika next year and will organise a meeting to address the problems of the region in 2004.

ELECTION MONITORING PROJECTS

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly continues to be very active in the field of election monitoring, having sent parliamentarians to monitor the elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Armenia in the past year. Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, Mr. Pieter de Crem and Mr. Giovanni Kessler were appointed the Special Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office to lead the election monitoring missions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Armenia respectively, and have done an excellent job in often difficult and demanding situations.

PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Our President, Mr. Bruce George, has worked extremely hard for the Assembly in his first term of office. He has paid several bilateral visits to OSCE participating States Parliaments, and has attended numerous meetings of the OSCE and partner organizations. We must be grateful to the British House of Commons for their financial support of President George's travels, as well as the time in his busy schedule, particularly recently when, in his role as Chairman of the Defence Committee in the House of Commons, he has also had many commitments. On many occasions, however, he has been able to combine his responsibilities of both the House of Commons and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I would also like to thank, in particular, Mr. Gustavo Pallares, the Presidential Adviser in the International Secretariat, who has worked very closely with the President, arranging visits, drafting speeches and talking points, as well as assisting him on his visits and at his meetings. In addition to Mr. Pallares, the Secretary General and all other senior staff of the

International Secretariat have alternately joined the President on visits related to their particular areas of responsibility.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

The Ad Hoc Committees remain an integral part of the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The presently active Committees, approved by the Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations, are on Abkhazia, Belarus, Kosovo, and Moldova, as well as the Committee on Transparency and Accountability.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia, established at the Standing Committee in February of 2001 and chaired by Ms. Tone Tingsgård of Sweden, has worked hard to facilitate dialogue between the two sides in the so-called “frozen conflict”. Ms. Tingsgård visited Georgia last month and met with the authorities, the OSCE Mission there and UNOMIG, the UN Mission there. Unfortunately, the Committee has met with a certain degree of resistance and have been unable to visit or even meet with the Abkhazian authorities. However, they remain committed to their tasks and will continue to work towards the establishment of a dialogue which can contribute to a solution to the problem. Programme Officer Tina Schøn has responsibility for the Committee on Abkhazia in the Secretariat and continues to try to liaise between the various parties to try to promote dialogue, as well to try to arrange visits to the region.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Belarus, created at the Standing Committee in July of 1998 and chaired by Ms. Uta Zapf of Germany, continues to be very active and has visited the country on several occasions. The Committee also co-operates closely with the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in a Parliamentary Troika in order to reinforce the importance of dialogue and the development of democracy within Belarus. Mr. Paul LeGendre, Programme Officer in the Secretariat who supports the Committee, continues to do an excellent job with a politically complex and difficult situation.

The Parliamentary Team on Moldova, established in February of 2000, chaired by Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen, co-organised a Seminar on Federalism in the country this May similar to the one held in the Åland Islands in 2001. The aim of the conference was to promote dialogue between all the parties concerned, including representatives from the Transdnestr region. Several questions regarding the situation remain unresolved, particularly with regard to the status of Transdnestr. Deputy Secretary General Pentti Väänänen, assisted by Programme Officer Paul

LeGendre, continues to work with the Team and the parties involved in order to contribute to the effort to bring stability within the country and with its neighbours.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Accountability in the OSCE, which was established at the Standing Committee in Paris in 2001 has been very active. Congressman Steny Hoyer chaired a meeting held in Vienna in conjunction with the Winter Meeting as a follow-up to several meetings held in the previous year. The Committee has recently been reconstituted due to the departure from politics of several of its members and will hold a meeting in Rotterdam to discuss its future work. The Committee continues to work to promote co-operation and dialogue between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE. The establishment of an OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna, the OSCE Secretary General's briefing of the OSCE PA Standing Committee on the annual proposed budget for the OSCE, and the President's annual address to the OSCE Permanent Council on PA priorities are concrete results of the work that has been carried out by the Committee. The Committee has been assisted in its work by Programme Officer Tina Schön, who has done an excellent job in preparing the work of the Committee.

THE BUDGET

I am happy to once again be able to report that the financial situation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is excellent. We have remained within the budgetary guidelines despite our extensive schedule of meetings, particularly in the first half of this year. The Treasurer, Senator Jerry Grafstein of Canada, will present his report at the Standing Committee, including all the relevant facts and figures. He met with our external auditors, KPMG Jespersen, who reported to him that the financial management of the Assembly is excellent and that the books are in great order and that the Parliamentary Assembly is financially sound. I would like to thank Per-Henrik Dürr, our Financial Assistant for all of his hard work in support of the Treasurer, as well as Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Pentti Väänänen, who shares overall responsibility for the finances of the Assembly with the Treasurer and the Secretary General.

THE SECRETARIAT

As I have already indicated, I am extremely proud of the staff of the International Secretariat, who work very hard to support and assist the Assembly, its parliamentarians and the Secretaries of Delegations. It is a very small, multi-national, multi-lingual team whose work has increased,

particularly over the past year, with the various initiatives that have been implemented on the Assembly's behalf.

I am particularly grateful to be supported by the Deputy Secretaries General, Pentti Väänänen and Vitaly Evseyev, who work extremely hard for this Assembly in their respective areas of responsibility and provide excellent guidance to the other members of staff. Their combined experience in international parliamentary work is unmatched in any other multilateral parliamentary organization.

I also continue to be most grateful for the generosity of the Dutch Government for the secondment of Jan Jooren, our Press and Public Affairs Counsellor, who promotes the work of the Assembly through contacts with the press, the production of reports and brochures, our internal News from Copenhagen and the website. Mr. Jooren makes an important contribution to the Assembly through his efforts to publicise its work and activities.

I have briefly mentioned Gustavo Pallares, who has worked extremely hard to support our President in his unstinting programme, but I would also like to thank the Programme Officers, Paul LeGendre, Tina Schøn and Alex Staun-Rechnitzer who have all assisted the Ad Hoc Committees, arranged OSCE Field Visits and election monitoring projects, worked with the Rapporteurs of the General Committees, as well as worked with my Deputies and with me to ensure the overall smooth running of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Many of the activities I have mentioned, in particular the meetings, conferences and Sessions, would not have been such successes without Almuth Janisch, our Conference Co-ordinator, and Kurt Andersen, our General Services Officer, who, under the guidance of Deputy Secretary General Vitaly Evseyev, work so hard to ensure the smooth running of our various meetings. Connie Mathiesen, our Senior Secretary, assists everyone in the office, maintaining our archives and co-ordinating all the necessary documents for our Annual Sessions. In today's technology driven world, we are all also reliant on Pia Rasmussen, our I-T Supporter, who is constantly in demand to answer all our computer questions and solve all of our technology related problems. Ms. Sophie Richardson, Assistant to the Secretary General, performs a multitude of tasks in a highly professional manner, including scheduling, staff co-ordination, correspondence, and liaison with the President's office, as well as fulfilling various administrative responsibilities.

THE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Last, but by no means least, I would like to recognize the contribution of the talented young people who come to the Secretariat for a six-month period as Research Fellows to work with the senior staff, providing research for speeches, briefing books, talking points, providing updates on the work being carried out by the OSCE Missions, as well as assisting the Rapporteurs of the General Committees with their Reports and draft Resolutions. They also ensure that the Secretariat maintains working capability in all six official OSCE languages, translating correspondence, brochures and reports. The Programme continues to be a great success. Since its creation, we have had over one hundred young people from over twenty OSCE participating States, many of whom have gone on to work in OSCE Field Missions, the OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Institutions, other international organizations, or in their national governments. Tina Schøn continues to do an excellent job co-ordinating the Programme. Sophie Richardson is responsible for recruiting and interviewing applicants for the Fellowship Programme. Information on the Research Fellowship Programme is featured on our website (www.osce.org/pa), which also includes the Application form and the documents which need to be sent in to the International Secretariat.

CONCLUSION

The past year has been the most active in our history and I believe we have achieved the high standing among international parliamentary organizations that has been our goal since the International Secretariat began its work over ten years ago. We could not have reached this goal without the dedicated work of the hundreds of parliamentarians who have participated in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during these early years of establishment and growth. The staff of the International Secretariat continues to be grateful for the support and co-operation we have received from nearly all OSCE Parliamentarians and, of course, as well as the support of the many Secretaries of Delegation with whom we have had the privilege to work.

I can also report that we have expanded our regular communications with national delegations through the increased use of electronic mail, particularly the distribution of the News from Copenhagen which provides timely information on all OSCE Parliamentary Assembly activities. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly also continues as well to publish regular reports in the governmental OSCE Newsletter which is also available to all national delegations.

Co-operation with our Dutch hosts in preparation for the Annual Session in Rotterdam has been excellent and we are confident that this Twelfth Annual Session will be an outstanding success. I can also report that preparations for the Standing Committee meeting, Mediterranean Forum and Fall Conference in Rome are underway and we look forward to an interesting and enjoyable meeting there in early October. The International Secretariat has already begun preparations for the Annual Session in Edinburgh, Scotland next year as well as for the Annual Session in 2005 in Washington, United States. Both our British and American hosts of these future meetings are making every effort to ensure the best possible arrangements. Plans are also underway for the next Winter Meeting in Vienna which will convene in February. The Assembly's election monitoring efforts will continue in the coming year, we expect a particularly large delegation to participate in the election observer mission to the Russian parliamentary elections in early December in particular.

Further details on the activities of the Assembly and the International Secretariat during the past year are available in various reports and documents distributed to various delegations, including a full compilation of each edition of the News from Copenhagen published during the past year.

Finally, I wish to thank the members and officers of the Assembly, the Officers of its General Committees, the Chairs of the Ad Hoc Committees, and hundreds of parliamentarians who have participated in OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meetings, conferences, seminars, election monitoring projects, Field Mission visits, and the work of the governmental OSCE. I am particularly grateful to the Secretaries of Delegation who have cooperated to provide the support and liaison which has made our work a success.