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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE (11 May – 17 May)

Rupel Hails Agreement on OSCE Budget

LJUBLJANA - OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dimitrij Rupel revealed on 12 May that an agreement had been reached by OSCE participating states on the organisation's budget for this year. By passing the EUR 168.6 mil. budget, the organisation will be able to operate normally and carry out envisaged projects and activities for this year, Rupel told the press.

OSCE Chair Urges Calm in Uzbekistan

LJUBLJANA - OSCE Chairman Dimitrij Rupel said on 15 May he was deeply concerned by the clashes between soldiers and anti-government protesters in the eastern Uzbek city of Andijan that left many dead. Rupel called on both sides to end the violence. "We are closely monitoring the situation, although independent information coming from the country is very limited," he said. He added the OSCE was ready to assist in preventing further bloodshed, as well as in finding a lasting peace. Rupel's envoy for Central Asia Alojz Peterle left for the region on 14 May and is ready to travel to Uzbekistan if Uzbek authorities ask for assistance. Assessing the violence in Andijan, Rupel said that while both sides resorted to violence, the number of casualties indicated that "one side appeared to have employed lethal violence in a disproportionate or reckless fashion". He called on the government in Tashkent to refrain from any more use of violence in resolving the current situation.

Detention of OSCE Monitors in South Ossetia Worries Rupel

LJUBLJANA - OSCE Chairman Dimitrij Rupel voiced his concern on 12 May over the temporary detention of two members of the OSCE Mission to Georgia by armed men in the area of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The pair was held at gunpoint by what reports said was a South Ossetian armed group near Avnevi, a village south-west of Tskhinvali. They were freed after the intervention of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces. "I am deeply concerned over this serious violation of existing agreements," Rupel said. He called on the South Ossetian leadership to take immediate steps to prevent such actions against unarmed international observers in the future.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WARSAW, 16 & 17 May - OSCE Chairman Dimitrij Rupel attends the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe.

PRAGUE, 23 through 27 May - The 13th meeting of the Economic Forum is to be held. The meeting will be attended by OSCE Chairman Dimitrij Rupel.