

Bruce George leads OSCE Election Monitors in Georgia

An OSCE PA Delegation of 21 parliamentarians from Armenia, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom observed the parliamentary elections in Georgia on 2 November 2003.

The Mission was headed by OSCE PA President Bruce George, who acted as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. Mr George delivered the preliminary post election statement on 3 November in Tbilisi, joined by Tom Cox, Head of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Delegation; Demetrio Volcic, Head of the Delegation of the European Parliament; and Julian Peel Yates, Head of the Long-Term Observation Mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The joint statement concluded that the elections fell short of a number of international standards. Delays and confusion over voter lists contributed to a lack of public confidence in the authorities' capacity to manage an effective and transparent election process.

Although the election provided voters with a wide choice of candidates, unrealistic timelines and improvised, last minute decisions threatened to undermine the otherwise improved work of the Central Election Commission. OSCE PA Presi-



dent Bruce George regretted that the 2 November parliamentary elections in Georgia "have been insufficient to enhance the credibility of either the electoral or the democratic process."

The OSCE PA Delegation was accompanied by Press Counsellor Jan Jooren and Programme Officer Tina Schøn.

7 December State Duma Elections

Sixty-four OSCE Parliamentarians from Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, the FYR of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom have already registered to observe the parliamentary elections in Russia on 7 December 2003.

The OSCE PA Observer Team will be headed by President Bruce George, who will also act as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the Observation Mission in Russia.

On Monday, 8 December, Bruce George will deliver the preliminary post-election statement in conjunction with other official election observers.

OSCE PA Delegation Participates in Aqaba Seminar

A Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly participated in the 2003 OSCE Mediterranean Seminar held in Aqaba, Jordan on 20 and 21 October. The Seminar was devoted to the "Comprehensive Approach to Security: The OSCE Experience and its Relevance for the Mediterranean Region".

Leading the Delegation was OSCE PA President Mr. Bruce George, who was joined by Mr. Michel Voisin, Head of the French Delegation and Special Representative for the Mediterranean, and Mr. Panayotis Kammenos, Vice-Chairman of the First General Committee and member of the Greek Delegation. The Delegation was accompanied by Mr. Stanislas Brezet, staff of the French National Assembly, and by Mr. Gustavo Pallarés from the Assembly's International Secretariat.

President Bruce George, as guest speaker, addressed the opening session of the Seminar. In his statement, he referred to the Assembly's active involvement in Mediterranean issues, including the First Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean held in Rome on 11 October. Mr. George also called for the need to strengthen dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE's Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

"The OSCE," he said, "can make a contribution to creating a more favourable atmosphere in

the Mediterranean as a whole, and here in the Middle East in particular by sharing its experience in overcoming the divisions of the past."

Mr. Michel Voisin intervened in the debates of the Seminar, outlining the need for further involvement of the OSCE in the Mediterranean, which should not be restricted to the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. He commented on the importance of strengthening the Barcelona Process and of economic co-operation.

Mr. Panayotis Kammenos also took part in the debates and informed the participants of the Assembly's activities regarding the Mediterranean, referring to the Second Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean, which, on the invitation of the Greek Parliament, will be held in Rhodes in October 2004.

With the objective of exchanging views and promoting the Assembly's Mediterranean dialogue, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly took the opportunity of his stay in Jordan to hold bilateral meetings with leading Jordanian officials. On Sunday 19 October, President George met with the Speaker of the Jordanian Senate, Mr. Zaid Al Rifai, and with the Deputy Speaker of the Jordanian Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Sami Al Khasawneh. On Monday 20 October, President George met with the Jordanian State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shaher Bak.