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ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE (30 March to 5 April)

During his visit to Turkmenistan OSCE Chairman notes importance of starting political reforms and democratisation

ASHGABAD, 29 March 2006 - The CiO H.E. Minister Karel De Gucht, paid a visit to Turkmenistan on 29 March. Minister De Gucht noted the importance of Turkmenistan's role in the OSCE in his discussions with President Niyazov. He called on the Government to "devote increased attention to the Human Dimension" and noted "it is important to start political reforms and democratisation."

OSCE Chairman encourages Tajik Government to push ahead with democratic reforms

DUSHANBE, 30 March 2006 – Continuing his trip in Central Asia to raise the profile of the OSCE, the CiO, Belgian Foreign Minister, Karel De Gucht, visited Tajikistan on Thursday and met with President Emomali Rakhmonov, Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov and representatives of civil society, political parties and the media. The Chairman praised the country's economic development, but noted that progress is still needed in the process of democratisation.

OSCE Chairman-in-Office concerned about violent incidents in Georgian prison

TASHKENT, 31 March 2006 – The OSCE Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht has expressed his concern about violent incidents that occurred in Georgia's Tbilisi prison No. 5 in the early hours of 27 March.

OSCE Chairman calls on Uzbekistan to make domestic reforms and strengthen civil society

TASHKENT, 1 April 2006 - The OSCE Chairman-in-office met top officials and civil society representatives in Uzbekistan and called for a strengthening of civil society as it has an important role to play in furthering democratic development. He was concerned about reports of increasing pressure on non-governmental organizations over the past few months.