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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Fall Meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary
Assembly**

**Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security
and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
(OSCE PA)**

**Toronto, Canada
September 18-21, 2008**

Report

From 18 to 21 September 2008, five Canadian parliamentarians attended the Fall Meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in Toronto, Canada. The Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable Noël Kinsella, served as host of the event. The Honourable Senator Consiglio Di Nino led the delegation, which included the Honourable Senator Jerahmiel Grafstein and the Honourable Senator Terry Mercer. Madame Francine Lalonde, Member of Parliament, attended as an individual. The delegation was accompanied by Jodi Turner, Delegation Secretary, Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Advisor, and Jean-Rodrigue Paré, Advisor. The event was organized by Elizabeth Rody, Chief of Protocol, and the Protocol Office of the Parliament of Canada.

OVERVIEW OF THE OSCE

Established in 1975 as the “Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe” (CSCE), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was given its current name at the Budapest Summit in December 1994. The OSCE participating countries, currently 56 in number, are “all the European states, the United States and Canada.”⁽¹⁾ Eleven other states from the Mediterranean area and Asia joined as observers and are known as “Partners for Cooperation.” The organization is defined as a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management. It is also recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the *United Nations Charter*, which requires that participating United Nations Member States “make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council.”⁽²⁾ However, the OSCE is not an international organization in the strict sense of international law, in that its resolutions are not legally binding on the signatory countries.

The OSCE’s 2008 budget is €164.2 million, of which nearly 75% is dedicated to field operations in 16 countries. The OSCE employs approximately 3,250 individuals, the vast majority of whom are assigned to field missions. One-quarter of the OSCE employees are seconded by the participating countries.

(1) *Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations*, Helsinki, 3 July 1973, par. 54, http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1973/07/4136_en.pdf.

(2) *Charter of the United Nations*, Chapter VIII, art. 52, par. 2, <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter8.htm>. The Security Council may also use such regional arrangements to implement coercive measures it has adopted.

A. An Inclusive, Global and Cooperative Approach to Security

The OSCE's unique character derives from its composition, which enables the United States and Canada to participate as full members in an organization that addresses European issues. The OSCE favours inclusive dialogue over selective admission. This enables it to keep communication channels open on key security issues between Western democracies and countries with less exemplary democratic records. It also promotes exchanges between the European Union and Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) that are not members of the Council of Europe. Whereas the foremost goal of the Council of Europe is to promote and defend democratic development and human rights, and to hold member governments accountable for their performance in these areas, the OSCE aims to foster the development of an expansive, conflict-free geographic area – from Vancouver to Vladivostok – regardless of the democratic characteristics of the participating states.

The OSCE's resolutions and activities stem from a comprehensive understanding of security that extends beyond the political-military model. In the *Charter for European Security*, adopted at the November 1999 Istanbul Summit, the heads of state and of government of the participating countries agreed to “address the human, economic, political and military dimensions of security as an integral whole.”⁽³⁾ All forms of peaceful cooperation between the participating countries are considered as having the potential to reduce the risks of conflict in the region. The OSCE's cooperative approach is confirmed by the fact that all 56 states have equal status. Decisions are made by consensus rather than majority vote.⁽⁴⁾

B. Operational Capacity

After the end of the Cold War, the OSCE developed its institutions and operational capacities in response to particular and often urgent needs, and not as a long-term strategic plan. The 1990 *Charter of Paris for a New Europe* laid the foundations for the OSCE's institutional framework.

Field activities account for almost 75% of the OSCE budget. The fact that it has no missions in Western Europe or North America is a point frequently raised by the Commonwealth of Independent States to argue that, although it claims to be cooperative and egalitarian, the OSCE applies a double standard in its relations with the participating countries. The OSCE's reply is that its operations stem from commitments made in a consensual manner and at the invitation of the countries themselves. The six OSCE missions in southeast Europe account for half of the organization's budget. At €30 million in 2008, the budget for the Kosovo mission alone is roughly equivalent to the allocation for the OSCE Secretariat (€31.6 million).

⁽³⁾ *Charter for European Security*, par. 9, in *Istanbul Document 1999*, Istanbul Summit 1999, http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1999/11/4050_en.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ In extreme cases, the “consensus minus one” rule may be invoked, for instance when a serious violation of the Organization's principles occurs. However, this rule has been used only once, in 1992, against the former Yugoslavia, which was readmitted as Serbia and Montenegro after the elections in the fall of 2000.

The OSCE is led by a rotating “chairman-in-office” who is selected from among the foreign ministers of the participating countries to serve a one-year term. As the organization’s senior diplomat, the chairman-in-office is supported by the Secretariat and its secretary general who are based in Vienna.

In 2008, Finland succeeded Spain as chair of the organization. Ilka Kanerva was the Chairman-in-Office between 1 January and 4 April, and was subsequently replaced by Alexander Stubb. France’s Marc Perrin de Brichambaut has served as OSCE Secretary General since June 2005.

C. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE. It was created by the OSCE (at that time the CSCE) in 1991 following the call set out by the participating States in the 1990 *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*. Its primary purpose is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues facing the participating States, issue recommendations for their own governments, parliaments and citizens concerning the OSCE’s three spheres of action. Among its objectives are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the OSCE;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States; and,
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is organised according to three General Committees representing the three “baskets” of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the areas of focus of the OSCE: the First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, the Second General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, and the Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Its work is also carried out by way of ad hoc committees, working groups, and special representatives and envoys. The Parliamentary Assembly also plays a key role in observing elections in the OSCE region and regularly sends parliamentary delegations on field missions.

It is managed by a Bureau and a Standing Committee. The Bureau comprises a President, nine Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, as well as the Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur for each of the three General Committees, and the President Emeritus. The Bureau is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Standing Committee are carried out and takes decisions by majority vote. The Standing Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly comprises the members of the Bureau and the 56 heads of delegation of the participating states. The Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget and appoints the Secretary General. It uses the

“consensus minus one” rule when voting on decisions, except in the case of the appointment of the Secretary General, which is done by a majority vote.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is administratively supported by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat who are located in Copenhagen. These were established and became operational in January 1993 soon after the creation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Today the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly comprises more than 300 parliamentarians who are appointed by their respective parliaments. Observers of the Assembly include parliamentarians from the OSCE’s Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) and Asian Partners for Cooperation (Japan, Korea, Thailand, Afghanistan and Mongolia), and representatives from other parliamentary assemblies and security organizations, such as NATO.

Since its first Annual Meeting in Budapest in July 1992, members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and representatives of the Partners for Co-operation have convened several times a year to carry out the mandate of the Assembly. The Assembly itself meets in plenary at the Annual Session held in July and hosted by the parliament of a participating State. The Annual Session is the most important event in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly calendar where the Assembly debates a number of OSCE matters and resolutions, receives reports, adopts the Session’s declaration, and elects its officers. At the Fall Meetings in September, also hosted by the parliament of a participating State, the Assembly in plenary holds a conference on a topical issue.

The General Committees meet at the Annual Session to debate and adopt resolutions, and elect Committee officers; they also convene jointly and separately at the Winter Meeting in February in Vienna, where the OSCE’s headquarters are located, to discuss and debate issues of importance, receive briefings by senior OSCE officials, and hear presentations by the Rapporteurs on their draft resolutions for the Annual Session.

The Bureau meets at the Annual Session as well as in April and December. The Standing Committee meets at the Annual Session, the Fall Meetings, and the Winter Meeting.

The OSCE PA also convenes to discuss more specific topics either on the margins of these regular annual meetings or at other times. For instance, the Parliamentary Forum on the Mediterranean is held during the Fall Meetings of the OSCE PA, and the Economic Conference is hosted by the parliament of a participating State every second spring.

The Assembly’s budget covers most of the organizational expenses related to the Annual Session, Winter Meeting, Fall Meetings, Standing Committee and Bureau Meetings, official visits, the election observation programme, as well as the costs of the International Secretariat. Host parliaments of the Annual Sessions contribute significantly by providing considerable support. The Secretariat’s office facilities are provided free of charge by the Danish Folketing. The PA’s 2008-2009 budget is €2.86 million. In 2007-2008 Canada contributed €147,621.

Mr. João Soares (Portugal) has been president of the PA since July 2008, succeeding Göran Lennmarker (Sweden). Mr. Spencer Oliver (United States) has served as

secretary general since January 1993. The Honourable Jerahmiel Grafstein, member of the Canadian Senate, has acted as vice-president since July 2007, having served as treasurer for six years. The Honourable Senator Consiglio Di Nino, head of the Canadian delegation since February 2005, has been vice-chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security since July 2007.

2008 FALL MEETINGS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

From 18 to 21 September 2008, a record number of over 250 parliamentarians from 52 of the 56 OSCE participating States, together with representatives of the “Partners for Co-operation” states, met for three complementary events: an inter-parliamentary conference on “The OSCE in an Open World: Trade, Security and Migration,” the Mediterranean Forum of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and the Standing Committee Meeting.

A. Inter-Parliamentary Conference, “The OSCE in an Open World: Trade, Security and Migration”

1. Opening Session

Mr. João Soares, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, addressed the Assembly for the first time since his election in July 2008. In calling the conference to order, he noted the timeliness of the theme, particularly since today’s world, while very different from that of 1975 when the Helsinki Final Act was first signed, may be more open but it continues to face many similar challenges. Indeed, the conference’s consideration of security challenges is all the more prescient in light of the recent crisis in Georgia. Mr. Soares also highlighted the priorities of his presidency: balanced activities between “West and East of Vienna”, greater transparency in the OSCE, particularly on the part of the Permanent Council, election observation missions, and gender equality.

The President also underlined the important role parliamentary diplomacy plays in complementing the work of executives in negotiating settlements to conflict, and urged parliamentarians to fulfill that role. Mr. Soares noted that a reinvigorated open and active dialogue is necessary among all parliamentarians in the region to transcend difficulties and disputes among governments.

Senator Consiglio Di Nino welcomed the participants to his home town and to the Fall Meetings. He emphasised that meetings such as these are essential in order to understand current issues and trends, while seizing opportunities to address problems more effectively. He noted that the theme and agenda of the present conference deal with some of the major trends that in recent years have been changing profoundly global dynamics. In particular, the session on security was reformatted to address specifically the crisis in Georgia in an open discussion. Senator Di Nino reminded the participants that while there are likely to be disagreements, the common purpose and mandate of the OSCE cannot be forgotten. He then summarised the agenda and speakers. He noted that the Canadian federal election campaign presented an opportunity to reflect on the type of leadership Canadians will be electing to face the issues of a rapidly changing world. In closing, Senator Di Nino invited the participants

to experience and to enjoy the diversity of Toronto and its record of tolerance and understanding.

On behalf of the Parliament of Canada, Speaker Noël Kinsella welcomed the participants to the Fall Meetings. He stressed the high value of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the importance of parliamentary diplomacy which creates a new paradigm of relations. In particular, he noted that Canada was an appropriate host of the OSCE PA meeting as Canada supports many of the values and principles of the OSCE. In noting the conference theme and its current relevance, Speaker Kinsella concentrated on movement as a characteristic of a more open world and in particular the movement of ideas. In this respect, he emphasised the importance of knowledge and education as the primary means by which progress in technology, economic exchanges, industrial productivity, transportation and communications can be achieved. At the same time, access to knowledge and education is unequally distributed across countries and is closely correlated with the economic wealth of countries. Obstacles are also apparent in the countries of the OSCE, including Canada, such as high tuition and associated living costs of education today. Speaker Kinsella reminded the participants of Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which includes a commitment to the “progressive introduction of free education.” He underlined the importance of a global system of education built on the movement of students and noted the progress made with the Bologna process aimed at removing barriers for student exchanges. He urged the participants to consider different means by which barriers to a global system of education may be lowered. In closing, Speaker Kinsella noted that the OSCE in an open world in part is about ensuring that the opportunities to promote the respect for human rights, including the right to education, are not missed.

a. Keynote Address

The Keynote Address was delivered by Gareth Evans, President, International Crisis Group and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia. His address was devoted to the ways in which the OSCE is best suited and most adaptable among existing regional organizations to meet immediate and emerging regional challenges. It was followed by a very spirited exchange of a wide range of opinions on his presentation.

In making his presentation, Mr. Evans highlighted the changed landscape in which the OSCE operates, globally and regionally, as well as across issue-areas. In his opinion, one such pivotal event is the Russian invasion and occupation of Georgia. According to Mr. Evans, while such an event is not likely to deteriorate geopolitical relations to the level of the Cold War, it is still of grave concern because of Russia’s nuclear arsenal and its military strength. Mr. Evans held Russia and Georgia both responsible for the recent crisis in South Ossetia: Russia for wanting to intimidate Georgia as well as Ukraine with regard to their closer relations with NATO, and Georgia for “recklessly” ignoring advice to not reclaim South Ossetia by force. Russia was particularly taken to task for pronouncing its will to defend Russian minorities in the Near Abroad which has the potential of destabilising the region in light of the presence of such minorities in the Baltic states, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine.

Mr. Evans noted that in order for the OSCE to consider what role it can play in the future, it first needs to be realistic about its marginalisation and that it has not been living up to its full potential. He noted, for instance, that there are many other actors who are addressing global economic and environmental concerns. Moreover, there is too much diversity in experiences and legislation among OSCE countries for any effective progress to be made regarding migration issues. It also has been unable to effect significant reform at the national level regarding anti-corruption and human rights. With respect to the latter, Mr. Evans noted Russia's behaviour in a number of areas that have undermined the OSCE. The OSCE's record of accomplishment regarding election observation missions also has been mixed. Mr. Evans also noted that consensus decision-making did not always result in "vibrant operational impact."

Despite these limitations, Mr. Evans stated that the OSCE does have a role to play in the region and in particular regarding the Russia-Georgia conflict because of its uniqueness. Whether or not Russia is willing to co-operate may be a factor, but since Russia is a member of the OSCE there are opportunities for constructive dialogue. Another positive feature of the OSCE is its ability to carry out conflict prevention and confidence-building measures, primarily through the deployment of field missions although the full potential of the latter needs to be harnessed. Mr. Evans also lauded the past work and future potential of the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).

Mr. Evans noted that the OSCE has the need and opportunity to operationalise the principle of "the responsibility to protect." According to this principle, the international community takes action to stop and react to situations of deadly violence and mass atrocity crimes as well as post-crisis rebuilding, even if by way of military force with Security Council approval, if a sovereign state fails in its responsibility to protect populations within its own borders. The HCNM, for instance, is well placed to effect this principle, particularly as it correctly made clear that Russia's attempt to apply it to the situation in South Ossetia was not justified.

Mr. Evans remarked that NATO is in a difficult position with respect to the Russia-Georgia crisis, thereby reinforcing the opportunity uniquely available to the OSCE. Despite its limitations,

If the ideas of common and cooperative security are to be kept alive, as they must be if we want to move to reduce the tensions of the present situation rather than adding to them, then the only readily available institutional vehicle for doing so is the OSCE. The broad security horizon of the OSCE, with its stress on "human dimension" aspects, and its strong track record in dealing with difficult and sensitive minority rights issues, makes it perhaps inherently more capable than anyone else of addressing the immediate challenges in the region – and more adaptable to meet emerging ones. By being inclusive, comprising all the countries of the region and then some, it offers a forum and mechanisms with which all sides can feel familiar and comfortable.

Mr. Evans also noted that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly plays an important role in setting the necessary tone and atmosphere for the required de-escalation, both through its regular statements and declarations as well as through the activities of the President and special envoys.

2. Session I: Economic/Environmental Dimension

Mr. Petros Efthymiou (Greece), Chairman of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science and Technology, chaired the first session of the conference devoted to the economic and environmental dimension, specifically trade in an open world. Two speakers addressed the parliamentarians in this session: Mr. Paul Evans, Co-CEO and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and Ms Debra Steger, Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa and Director of EDGE (Emerging, Dynamic, Global Economies) Network. Their presentations generated significant discussion among the parliamentarians during the time allocated for debate.

- Paul Evans remarked that while the OSCE is considered by some in Asia as a model and inspiration for Asia's future, it may not be perfectly suited to the historical context or political realities of the various security complexes in different parts of Asia. He emphasised that Asia's global emergence is of particular relevance to the OSCE member countries because of the global networks of production, particularly for Canada. Asia's emergence is also relevant in light of the OSCE's own activities at the intersection of Europe and Asia. In this respect, institutions such as the OSCE will need to be prepared to change in order to accommodate such developments and the related economics, environment and security issues to come. Mr. Evans considered the extent to which Asia will bring its principles into the international order that was created on the basis of European and North American principles. Thus, an "open world" means having to be ready for an order that may be different than what has existed for the last fifty years. The challenge will be to accept these new influences while trying to shape them in creative directions. In closing, Mr. Evans suggested that Asia may benefit from inter-parliamentary assemblies similar to the OSCE PA.
- Debra Steger addressed the current crisis in the world economy, looking at the shocks and volatility in world markets, the price of oil, food shortages and unemployment. She emphasised that in responding to the challenges of the new global economy, there is a choice to be made between international cooperation and unilateral action, i.e. openness versus protectionism. She noted that there are currently pressures to act unilaterally and protect national jobs and the national economies from the challenges of global competition. In closing, Ms Steger concluded that the world is currently emerging out of a long economic boom and that macro-economic turbulence will continue. It remains for the choice to be made between openness/competition and protectionism/unilateralism without forgetting the gains from globalization.

3. Session II: Security and Political Dimension: The Recent Crisis in Georgia:

The conference program was amended from its original agenda in order to accommodate a special debate on the recent crisis in Georgia. This was the first time since violence erupted in August that representatives from Russia and Georgia debated the issue face to face. The session was chaired by President Soares and began with a presentation by the OSCE PA President Emeritus and Special Envoy for Georgia, Mr.

Goran Lennmarker, who recently visited the region. The debate was led by two specially invited guests: Georgia's Foreign Minister, Ms Eka Tkeshelashvili, and Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mr. Vitaly Churkin. Following their presentations, Ambassador Aleksi Harkonen, Head of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship Task Force and Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, also made presentations. A significant number of parliamentarians participated in the spirited debate that followed.

- Mr. Lennmarker looked at the present, past and future perspectives of the crisis. From the perspective of the present, he said that the experiences of the refugees will define this conflict. In this respect, he suggested that a fact-finding exercise take place, perhaps carried out by observers on the ground and/or by a "Catastrophe Commission" that could be created, to establish the truth about what happened during the hostilities, and especially about whether or not ethnic cleansing had occurred. Moreover, a secure environment is essential to facilitate the return of refugees. From the perspective of the past, Mr. Lennmarker said that the whole lesson of Europe, and of efforts to build a multi-ethnic Kosovo in particular, is that there can be no ethnic cleansing, and this should not be allowed to take place in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. With respect to the future, he suggested that it was time for the three countries of the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) to come together and help each other to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in order to demonstrate that they can shape their own future. Mr. Lennmarker also supported the Turkish initiative that sought to widen the scope of negotiations regarding Nagorno-Karabakh to include Turkey and the EU. In conclusion, he sounded a cautionary note against revenge wars.
- Ms Tkeshelashvili, the Foreign Minister of Georgia, underscored the importance of the OSCE PA holding a debate on this topic at its Fall Meetings. According to her, such a debate allows an important assessment of what happened, the historical events that led to the outbreak of hostilities, and future directions not only for Georgia but also for international law and human rights. She questioned the notion of "frozen conflicts," saying that the international community has allowed such situations to achieve a level of unsettled stability in the hopes that a solution and positive changes will materialise on their own. She called for a vehicle that would affect confidence-building measures and support the peace process with actual results, thereby leading to the return of refugees and peace negotiations. In light of the unsettled conflicts, Ms Tkeshelashvili noted that, despite Georgia's patience over the last fifteen years, the situation quickly escalated following Kosovo's declaration of independence, NATO's Summit in April 2008, and the shelling of Georgian villages in July. She called for an international impartial, comprehensive investigation of the facts and immediate cause of the outbreak of hostilities in August 2008, specifically the invasion of Georgia's territory by its neighbour which used military force and ethnic cleansing as a tool of foreign policy. She praised the leadership of the European Union, its Presidency and Europe as a whole in bringing about an end to the hostilities and hoped that their efforts would continue to find a lasting solution, including the return of refugees and the restoration of confidence among all communities.

- Ambassador Churkin began by welcoming the opportunity to return to Canada where he served as ambassador for almost five years. He presented the Russian perspective of the deterioration of stable relations among the Georgians, Abkhazians and Ossetians following the collapse of the Soviet Union and secession of Georgia. This deterioration led to bloodshed which Russia took positive steps to end, including the establishment of a cease-fire and a peacekeeping arrangement supported by the UN and the OSCE. Ambassador Churkin noted that attempts to negotiate a peaceful solution within this framework were unsuccessful because the Georgian leadership was unable to negotiate with the minorities. Mikhail Shakashvelli became President of Georgia in 2003 and took a series of anti-Ossetian actions that undermined any peaceful attempts to settle the conflict, culminating in the Georgian military action on 7-8 August 2008 which led to the deaths of many civilians, including Russian citizens. He noted that Russian appeals to Georgia to observe the international principle of the non-use of force and its early warnings to the international community of Georgia's planned aggression were disregarded. As a result, Russia's response was required in order to avoid repeating the experience of UN peacekeepers in Srebrenica (whose withdrawal from their area of responsibility resulted in the mass execution of Bosnians). Thus, Russia was open to an independent investigation of events and the Ambassador defended the steps that Russia took in full accordance with the UN Charter in order to protect the rights of Russian citizen and to implement its peacekeeping obligations. Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was based on the results of referenda held by these populations in support of independence. The Ambassador emphasised Russia's intent to cooperate in order to achieve a lasting solution and lasting peace which includes the return of refugees under conditions of trust and confidence. As part of his conclusions, he noted that the crisis exposed the shortcomings of the current European security structure and called on all to join Russian President Medvedev in preparing and concluding a legally binding treaty on European security that modifies the current architecture.
- Mr. Tokayev, Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan, began by expressing his gratitude to the Canadian parliament for the opportunity to meet in Toronto for the OSCE PA fall meetings. He noted that only the UN and the OSCE PA have been able to provide a platform on which officials from Russia and Georgia have discussed such an important issue. In addition to Mr. Lenmarker's efforts, Mr. Tokayev also acknowledged the mission of President Soares to Moscow to obtain information on the Russian point of view of the conflict. He noted that the conflict assigned a tremendous responsibility to Kazakhstan given the nature of its relationships with Russia and Georgia. He reiterated Kazakhstan's position that calls for a diplomatic solution and offered its service to act as a bridge between the parties. He noted the pointlessness of assigning blame to one side or another and called for restraint and expressions of support to the international missions and diplomatic efforts being carried out. He reiterated Kazakhstan's welcome of the agreements in place and called for the agreements to be fully implemented. Mr. Tokayev also emphasised that while territorial integrity of a state supersedes the right of self-determination, states are expected to uphold international principles of human rights, including those concerning ethnic minorities. He committed Kazakhstan to supporting the efforts of

the OSCE mission to resolve the situation and, as the next OSCE Chairman-in-Office, to the organization's ability to manage crises and build peace in the OSCE region.

- Ambassador Harkonen, Head of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship Task Force, welcomed the role played by the Parliamentary Assembly regarding the crisis in Georgia, particularly the appointment of President Emeritus Lennmarker as Special Envoy. He summarised the activities undertaken by the Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Alexander Stubb, since the beginning of the crisis. These included several meetings with President Shakashvili of Georgia and the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov. He noted the need to increase the number of OSCE military monitoring officers and greater international action in order to stabilise the region. OSCE foreign ministers were also consulted and numerous statements on the crisis were issued, including the criticism of the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. With respect to the deployment of monitors, Ambassador Harkonen – among other information regarding action taken by the OSCE field mission to Georgia – detailed the situation concerning the additional OSCE monitors who would support the cease-fire agreement, some of whom were deployed immediately. In the context of multilateral negotiation efforts, Ambassador Harkonen indicated that the Chairman-in-Office would do what is possible to ensure the OSCE's leadership role together with the United Nations and EU. He reported on the activities of other OSCE institutions, such as the High Commissioner on National Minorities and ODIHR regarding the situation in Georgia and concluded by emphasising that the OSCE has not been asked to leave Georgia and to not get involved in efforts to resolve the crisis. He emphasised that both the governmental and the parliamentary side of the OSCE family have roles to play and should intensively work together in doing so.

4. Session III: The Human Dimension

The third session of the conference featured a presentation by the newly appointed Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Mr. Janez Lenarcic, and a panel on migration in an open world with Ms Ratna Omidvar, President of the Maytree Foundation and Founding Board Chair of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council and Mr. Peter Schatzer, Regional Representative for the Mediterranean, International Organization for Migration as speakers. The session was chaired by Ms Walburga Habsburg-Douglas (Sweden). It ended with debate involving the participation of many parliamentarians.

- Ambassador Lenarcic addressed the Assembly for the first time in his new capacity. He remarked the important role of parliamentarians in translating OSCE commitments into reality. He also encouraged all countries to work to fulfill their commitments. He thanked the Assembly for their contributions in the field of election observation, and noted the important role that parliamentarians have in following up on recommendations of OSCE missions. Mr. Lenarcic also noted that the OSCE PA's activities had inspired ODIHR's work in areas such as protecting human rights defenders and working on opening legislative processes. He highlighted ODIHR reports and recommendations in the fields of human trafficking, tolerance and non-discrimination as relevant to the Assembly's work on migration-related issues.

- Ms Omidvar shared the Canadian experience in migration and reviewed the similarities and differences with Europe. She noted in particular that migration is an important response to aging populations and declining birthrates. On the other hand, Canada is in a position to be selective in its migrants and future citizens because of geographic distance. She noted that contrary to many other countries, migration is not a particularly controversial political topic in Canada; moreover, not a single political party includes anti-immigration in its platform. Multiculturalism is a critical Canadian symbol and is a key value of a “hyper-diverse” landscape, no matter the path of its evolution. She discussed the well-developed structure for immigrants coming to Canada, both by the government and by communities. Ms Omidvar reviewed some of the struggles encountered by such a diverse society, such as finding a balance between collective and individual rights in legislative and institutional manifestations. Ms Omidvar stressed that the real story of immigrants in Canada came with second generation migrants, whose success can be found in all walks of life and in senior leadership positions. In reviewing some of the migrant challenges, she spoke about the difficulties of an increasing number of educated and talented migrants, particular those of color, finding work in their area of specialisation, thus being unable to move away from the socio-economic margins of society. Other challenges come in the form of back-logs in immigration applications, weak emotional integration with Canada, and extremism. She emphasised the need to continue to look for new and better ideas in implementing policies related to migration and highlighted the work of a worldwide network of cities with high immigrant populations that could share experiences and expertise. In this respect, she identified the lessons that Canada can learn from European local assimilation programs.
- Mr. Schatzer focused on the Mediterranean where there had been a sharp increase recently in the number of irregular migrants arriving by rickety boats on the coasts of Italy and Greece. He pointed out that the large majority of illegal migrants in Europe arrive as tourists and overstay their visas or use forged documents. He noted that there were improved prospects in channelling migration into legal avenues, which can help to fight the crime that fuels human trafficking. Spain, in particular, has had some success in working together with Senegal, Morocco, and some Latin American countries. Mr. Schatzer described his concern related to the growing number of unaccompanied minors who were undertaking the dangerous journey of irregular migration. Moreover, most attempts to return minors to their families failed because migrants tend to hide their identities and because many families choose to avoid the financial burden of raising a child. He also noted that the number of females arriving in Italy illegally by boat had increased significantly. He stressed the importance of international cooperation on several levels to address this broad range of challenges. He said that varying resources by countries must be addressed by a genuine partnership between those with and without capacity. Mr. Schatzer emphasised that governments, parliaments, the business community and civil society all have a role to play in overcoming these problems. There is also a difficulty in balancing the legitimate need for population movement with growing security concerns.

5. Closing Session

To close the conference, Senator Di Nino thanked the International Secretariat of the OSCE PA, the panellists and moderators, the interpreters, parliamentary and delegation staff, Elizabeth Rody and her team at Parliamentary Protocol, and the conference participants for the high quality of debate and the mutual respect demonstrated. He indicated that the conference theme, crafted several months earlier, became especially timely in light of the current crises affecting the OSCE participating states. He reinforced the role parliamentarians play in addressing difficult and interdependent issues, as well as the unique contribution of the OSCE in promoting dialogue among different points of view, and an enduring peace.

Speaker Kinsella spoke on behalf of the Canadian delegation and thanked the participants for coming to Toronto and making the conference the enlightening experience that it was. He also thanked President Soares for chairing the conference. He noted that many issues and new ideas were explored. He emphasised the important issue of migration and its relationship with security, and highlighted Speaker Tokayev's presentation about the need to find new models of resolution.

President Soares ended the conference by thanking the Canadian hosts for organizing such an exceptional event. He also thanked the staff and the interpreters in conducting the conference in such a remarkable fashion. He underscored the historical importance of the political debates held at the conference, particularly regarding the crisis between Russia and Georgia.

B. Mediterranean Forum

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual Mediterranean Forum was chaired by Senator Jerry Grafstein, Vice-President of the Assembly. It was noted to be the best attended Forum since its establishment in 2003, highlighted by high level representation from Algeria, Israel, Jordan, and Morocco. Following the presentations by the speakers, parliamentarians from Algeria, Israel, Jordan and Morocco were invited to the podium, after which a significant number of Forum participants actively exchanged opinions on the themes and topics raised.

In his opening statements, Senator Grafstein welcomed the participants to Toronto and invited everyone to experience the city's multiculturalism, tolerance and integration, and food representative of all of the participating States of the OSCE. He also emphasised Canada's openness towards immigration. He noted that meetings of the Mediterranean Forum have been held over the past decade in countries bordering the Mediterranean to foster trade, economic development and political consensus in order to advance peace and prosperity in the region. In later remarks, Senator Grafstein implicated the high tariffs particularly on agricultural products demanded by developed economies in affecting the region's economy and called for greater promotion of free trade in the area. He highlighted some of the demographic, employment, and gender weaknesses and strengths of the region's economy. He reminded the participants of the European Coal and Steel Community, the forerunner of the European Union, as an example of what can be gained in terms of security and stability by forging free trade arrangements and economic partnerships.

In his remarks, President Soares noted that Toronto is one of the most successful multilinguistic, multicultural cities in the world. He underlined that the Forum

demonstrates the close link between Mediterranean and OSCE issues. He noted that work on Mediterranean affairs has been gradually increasing over the years, and that he hoped it would continue to increase. He emphasised that the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners share many concerns, such as terrorism, migration, energy security and human trafficking and should work together to address them to ensure that initiatives to address them are successful. President Soares concluded that he hopes that more parliamentarians from the partner countries will follow the example of Jordan and participate in OSCE PA election observation missions since such experiences contribute to the dialogue and spirit of Helsinki.

U.S. Congressman Alcee Hastings, Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, began by thanking Senators Di Nino and Grafstein and the Canadian delegation for organising the conference. He underlined that the Mediterranean Forum allowed for greater discussion of the theme of the Fall Meetings: trade, security and migration. He emphasised that the principles of the OSCE are consistent with the concept of an open world, both of which hold tremendous promise for empowering the Mediterranean partners. Congressman Hastings noted that the Mediterranean partners contribute to the work of the OSCE PA. He acknowledged the economic growth recently experienced by many countries in the Mediterranean region which is due in large part to their own ingenuity and entrepreneurship. He also raised Canada as an example of successful immigration policies and a country with important lessons for all countries, including the United States. He noted that migration is more complex in the Mediterranean context and much work remains to be done, particularly with respect to further economic development and decreasing economic disparities in the region. He also spoke about the plight of Iraqi refugees affecting some of the countries of the Mediterranean.

The first Keynote Address to the Mediterranean Forum was delivered by Mr. Gilles Mentré, Secretary General of the Task Force on the Union for the Mediterranean at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He reviewed France's proposal which is intended to further develop the EU's Euromediterranean Partnership and in doing so, summarised the reasons behind pursuing such an initiative. Entitled the Union for the Mediterranean, the initiative unites all EU members with several non-EU countries that border the Mediterranean Sea, promoting co-operation on energy issues, security, immigration and trade, as well as fighting corruption, terrorism, organized crime and human trafficking. Based on the Barcelona Process, it seeks to energize the political and diplomatic processes to advance cooperation and to put the "North and South on equal footing" by creating institutions under joint leadership. Its other elements include working on economic projects together in order to achieve a level of solidarity and promote the peace process and political conciliation. They also need to involve all levels of government and key stakeholders, including NGOs. Some of the projects being pursued include pollution reduction, scientific cooperation and mobility, and support to small- and medium-sized enterprises.

As the second Keynote speaker, Ambassador Mara Marinaki, Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE and Chair of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean partners, began by underlining the importance that Greece – OSCE Chair in 2009 – attaches to the strengthening of the OSCE Mediterranean dimension,

particularly as it is a Mediterranean state. She reviewed the evolution of the relationship between the OSCE and Mediterranean Partners, highlighting in particular the explicit stipulation provided in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act that European security is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area. Among other highlights from various summit documents and ministerial declarations which have contributed to the formation of a solid partnership between the Mediterranean partners and the OSCE and efforts to address security threats in a coordinated fashion, she listed the 2003 OSCE strategy to address threats to security in the 21st century. She reminded the participants of the provisions of the 2007 Madrid Declaration on the OSCE Partners for Cooperation whose implementation she indicated would be a priority for the Greek OSCE Chairmanship among other activities and themes. She also announced that the Greek OSCE Chairmanship will be naming a Special Envoy for the Mediterranean. The 2009 Fall Meetings of the OSCE PA will also be held in Athens and the intention is to use the occasion to strengthen the relationship between the Chairmanship and the OSCE's parliamentarians.

C. Standing Committee

Senator Di Nino welcomed the Heads of Delegation to the Standing Committee Meeting. President Soares, who chaired the meeting, highlighted the important contribution that the Parliamentary Assembly made in holding a debate dedicated to the crisis in Georgia. He indicated that he would like to promote focused topical debates during Assembly meetings. He reported on his activities since being elected to the office in July 2008, including meetings with the new director of ODHR, appointing President Emeritus Lennmarker as Special Representative to Georgia, and senior Russian parliamentarians and government officials.

The OSCE PA Treasurer, Hans Raidel, reported that the Assembly remained in excellent financial condition. The finances were subject to oversight by the PA's external auditors, KPMG. He took note of the request that the draft budget be distributed well in advance of Assembly meetings.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver thanked the Canadian Parliament for hosting the Toronto Fall Meetings. He also reported that the Secretariat staff was taking action to provide more interactive content on the Assembly's website.

The Special Representative in Vienna, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, briefed members on recent development on the OSCE governmental side.

Deputy Secretary General Tina Schon reported on two election observation missions occupying the Secretariat in Belarus and in the United States.

Reports by a number of Special Representatives were also given, including the Special Representative on Transnational Crime and Gender Issues. The latter discussed her intention to propose a change to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure to improve gender equality in national delegations. Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen outlined his intentions to improve engagement with Central Asian countries, particularly on intra-regional cooperation.

Ambassador Aleski Harkonen, Head of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship Task Force, gave an overview of recent work by the Chairmanship, noting in particular how the crisis

in Georgia had impacted its work. He outlined efforts related to mediation in Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh. He also expressed the Chairmanship's hopes for a concise political declaration during the Ministerial Council meeting to be held in Helsinki in December 2008.

The Secretary General of the OSCE, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, briefed members on the draft 2009 OSCE budget. He described the challenges posed by a policy of zero nominal growth, and noted that the Secretariat in Vienna had gradually increased its portion of the budget as it increased thematic functions. The Secretary General discussed gender balance in the OSCE and noted difficulties in staffing, including a lack of secondment proposals by participating states. Members requested further information on auditing within the OSCE.

D. Activities of the Canadian Delegation

The Fall Meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly took place in the midst of Canada's federal election campaign. Specifically, Parliament was dissolved on 7 September 2008, a week before the Fall Meetings, and the election was scheduled for 14 October 2008. The election made it impossible for a full delegation, reflective of the Parliament of Canada hosting the event, to participate. Nonetheless, the level of involvement and profile of the Senators who comprised the delegation was not diminished. In particular, as hosts, Speaker Kinsella and Senator Di Nino issued opening and closing remarks at the conference, and Senator Grafstein chaired the Mediterranean Forum. Senator Di Nino and Senator Grafstein also participated in the debates on the economic/environmental dimension, the Russia-Georgia conflict, and the human dimension. In light of their offices within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, both participated in the meeting of the Standing Committee.

Media Coverage

- The Fall Meetings began with a press conference at which Senator Di Nino and Senator Grafstein spoke. The press conference was attended by several journalists representing some of the media outlets and Toronto-based communities of the participating states of the OSCE. The press conference highlighted the program of the Fall Meetings, particularly the special debate on Russia and Georgia. In their responses to questions from the press, Senators Di Nino and Grafstein emphasised the value of the OSCE for Canada as a forum for dialogue and the resources Canada brings to the organization as a multicultural, tolerant society.
- The Fall Meetings and specifically the special debate on Russia and Georgia received coverage in the Wednesday, 17 September 2008 issue of the Toronto Star. Moreover, CBC Newsworld's program, Worldview, hosted by Brian Stewart, broadcast an interview on Saturday, 20 September 2008 with two parliamentarians from Russia and Georgia who were in Toronto to participate in the Fall Meetings.
- Senator Grafstein wrote an editorial on Canada's leadership in hosting the Fall Meetings and the scheduled special debate on the Russia-Georgian conflict which was published in the National Post on Monday, 15 September 2008.

Bilateral Meetings

Speaker Kinsella had a bilateral meeting with Kassym Tokayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The two Speakers discussed future directions in Canada-Kazakhstan relations, particularly in the economic sphere, increased investments, energy technology transfers, Afghanistan, the impact of the growth of China and India, and the possibility of increased student exchanges. Chairman Tokayev emphasised Kazakhstan's improvements in its democratic qualities and readiness to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010. He also expressed his gratitude for Canada's support for Kazakhstan in acceding to the WTO. Chairman Tokayev also invited Speaker Kinsella to Kazakhstan.

Presence of Municipal, Provincial and Diplomatic Dignitaries

Over the course of the meetings various dignitaries from the municipal and provincial levels of government hosted and attended some of the events, thereby demonstrating their appreciation for the work of the OSCE PA. These dignitaries included:

- His Worship David Miller, Mayor of the City of Toronto
- Honourable Steve Peters, Speaker of the Ontario Legislature
- Honourable Gerry Phillips, Chair of Cabinet and Minister Without Portfolio of Ontario
- Chief Bill Blair of the City of Toronto Police

Members of the diplomatic corps also attended many of the program functions. They included representatives from the embassy or consular offices of, among others, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, France, Germany, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The Fall Meetings presented an opportunity to showcase Canada and Toronto to members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from its 56 participating states. In this respect, its multiculturalism and democratic traditions were prominently featured. The participants of the Fall Meetings unanimously agreed that they were the most successful held by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Among the reasons cited for its success were the impressive line-up of speakers, the high quality of debate, and the timeliness of debating the recent conflict between Russia and Georgia. In particular, the Special Representative on Gender Issues, Tone Tingsgaard, congratulated the Parliament of Canada for respecting the principle of gender balance in selecting the panel speakers. The Fall Meetings were also acknowledged for respecting environmental concerns and minimising in particular the amount of paper distributed to participants.

The success of the Fall Meetings were acknowledged and reflected in several congratulatory notes issued by prominent members of the OSCE PA structure, notably President Emeritus Congressman Alcee Hastings and Senator Ben Cardin, Co-chairs of the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe of the United States who wrote:

The conference was extremely well organized and well attended. You and your colleagues on the Canadian delegation are to be complimented for the efficiency and effectiveness with which all aspects of the meetings were conducted. This fall conference was also one of the most substantive to date . . . ,

and Secretary-General Oliver who commented that :

The Toronto meeting was one of the best, perhaps the best, meeting that the OSCE PA has ever held. The organization was superb, everything seemed to work exactly as planned, on time, efficient, and in a warmly welcoming atmosphere. . . . You have set a standard that will be hard, if not impossible, for future hosts to match.

Senator Di Nino referred to these notes of congratulations, respectively, in his statement in the Senate on 25 November 2008 on the Fall Meetings. Senator Di Nino further cited the level of professionalism and dedication on the part of the parliamentary staff, in particular Chief of Protocol, Elizabeth Rody, as central to the success of the Fall Meetings. His remarks are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Bev Shipley, M.P.
Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
ACTIVITY	Fall Meetings
DESTINATION	Toronto, Canada
DATES	September 18-21, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Noël Kinsella, Senator Consiglio Di Nino, Senator Jerahmiel Grafstein and Senator Terry Mercer
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mrs. Francine Lalonde, M.P.
STAFF	Mrs. Jodi Turner, Mrs. Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Mr. Jean-Rodrigue Paré, Mrs. Elizabeth Rody and Mrs. Micheline Georges
TRANSPORTATION	\$1,201.81
ACCOMMODATION	\$7,637.12
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$927.30
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$41.08
TOTAL	\$9,807.31