



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
Respecting its participation at the 8th Winter Meeting of the
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

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

**Vienna, Austria
February 19-20, 2009**

Report

From 19 – 20 February 2009, five Canadian parliamentarians attended the Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in Vienna, Austria. The Honourable Senator Consiglio Di Nino led the delegation, which included the Honourable Senator Jerahmiel Grafstein, Mr. David Tilson, Member of Parliament and President of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, Mr. Dean Allison, Member of Parliament and Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal, Member of Parliament. The delegation was accompanied by François Michaud, Delegation Secretary and Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Advisor.

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 2009 budget is €158.7 million, a decrease from the 2008 budget which was €164.2 million. Approximately 75% of the OSCE’s budget is dedicated to 25 field missions and other field activities. The OSCE employs approximately 3,450 individuals, the vast majority of whom are assigned to field missions. One-quarter of the OSCE employees are seconded by the participating countries.

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

⁽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.

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 missions and other 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 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 2009 Greece succeeded Finland as chair of the organization. Foreign Minister of Greece Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis has been Chairman-in-Office. 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

⁽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.

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, the Chair, the 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 reports 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 budget is approved at the Annual Session; the 2008-2009 budget, approved at the 2008 Annual Session, is €2.86 million. In 2009-10 Canada's budgeted contribution is C\$256,643.

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 from 2001-2007. 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.

2009 WINTER MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

From 19 to 20 February 2009, 250 parliamentarians from the 56 OSCE participating States, together with representatives of the "Partners for Co-operation" states, met in Vienna for the 8th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The program comprised a meeting of the Standing Committee, an opening plenary session, separate meetings of the three general committees, a plenary session which featured a special

debate on proposals for new European security architecture, and a closing plenary session.

A. Standing Committee

At the meeting of the Standing Committee, the Bureau members and the heads of delegation heard the following presentations:

- President Soares reported on activities since his election in July 2008:
 - strengthening the PA's role in ongoing OSCE activities, particularly by serving as a forum for open debate on the most important issues facing the OSCE region, such as the crisis in Georgia, proposals for a European security architecture, and the world financial crisis, as well as in election observation missions;
 - strengthening relations with other OSCE institutions and meeting with OSCE officials, such as the incoming Chair-in-Office, the new Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as well as addressing the OSCE Ministerial Council, ODIHR's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the OSCE Permanent Council;
 - the appointment of new Special Representatives on the conflict in Georgia (President Emeritus Goran Lennmarker - Sweden), on Afghanistan (Michel Voisin – France);
 - continued mediation of conflicts such as in Georgia and Moldova;
 - election observations in the United States; and,
 - meetings with other institutions and officials, such as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Speaker of the Parliament of Serbia, Speaker of the Parliament of Lithuania, and high level representatives in Moldova.
- The Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, in his report on OSCE activities, noted that the OSCE continues to have a significant role to play in regional security and in addressing the challenges faced by the participating states. He raised concerns about budgetary problems experienced by the OSCE and hoped that these would be resolved in the near future.
- The PA Treasurer, Mr. Hans Raidel (Germany), presented a very positive financial report that is reviewed by an auditor. He noted that the PA operates very effectively and efficiently. He cautioned that the current financial crisis will impact on the OSCE PA budget and on every parliament.
- Secretary-General Spencer Oliver presented his report on future activities of the Secretariat, including upcoming election observation missions such as in

Macedonia, Moldova, and Albania, as well as updates to the OSCE PA website, and his schedule of high-level meetings.⁵

- Deputy Secretary-General Tina Schøn presented a report specifically on election observation missions and the relationship between the OSCE PA and ODIHR in these missions which remain tense. She emphasized the principles of the Copenhagen Accord governing the relationship between the two institutions, and the need for support from the Parliamentary Assembly in moving forward on the issue.

Reports were also presented to the Standing Committee by the following Working Groups and Special Representatives:

- Ms Uta Zapf (Germany) on the Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, who noted in particular an upcoming seminar on economic investment issues;
- Senator Ben Cardin (United States) on Guantanamo, who stressed his hope that this would be the last report in light of the US administration's intention to close it;
- Mr Michel Voisin (France) on Afghanistan, who stressed the importance of assisting the local population;
- Mr. Alcee Hastings (United States) on the Mediterranean Forum, who reported on developments in Iraq, particularly concerning Iraqi refugees, the OSCE engagement in the Middle East Peace Process, and increased cooperation in the Maghreb economy;
- Mr. Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) on South East Europe, who noted upcoming election observations missions in the region;
- Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen (Finland) on Central Asia, who reported on the improved role of the PA in the region;
- President Emeritus Goran Lenmarker (Sweden) on the Caucasus, including Nagorno-Karabakh, noting that a solution could be reached in 2009, and the conflict in Georgia, noting the necessity of more observers to Georgia for early warning;
- Senator Carlo Vizzini (Italy) on the fight against transnational organized crime; and,
- Mr. Tony Lloyd (United Kingdom) on the Gaza Strip.

The Standing Committee then heard reports on preparations for future OSCE PA meetings in 2009, specifically:

- a Bureau meeting on 19-20 April in Lisbon, Portugal;
- the Economic Conference on 27-29 May in Dublin, Ireland;

⁵ <http://www.oscepa.org/images/stories/nats%20stuff/Spencer's%20remarks%2019.02.09%20ENG.pdf>

- the Eighteenth Annual Session on 29 June to 3 July in Vilnius, Lithuania;
- the Fall Meetings on 9-12 October in Athens, Greece;
- a Bureau meeting on 30 November 2009, and the OSCE Ministerial Council on 1-2 December 2009 in Athens, Greece.

B. Opening Plenary

At the first joint session of the three General Committees, the OSCE PA heard the following presentations:

- Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Nationalrat, in the opening remarks, spoke of the continuing work of the OSCE PA. She highlighted the OSCE's emphasis on comprehensive security, i.e. political/security, economic and environmental, and humanitarian issues, as invaluable to ensuring regional stability.
- Mr. John Tanner, President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, addressed the OSCE PA. He stressed the common goals and members of the two Assemblies, notably conflict prevention, which work to reinforce each other's efforts. In this respect, the NATO PA also participates in OSCE PA election observation missions. He noted that by participating in each other's meetings, the two institutions serve as important vehicles in the promotion of Euro-Atlantic dialogue. He drew attention to such common concerns as the global economic crisis and the danger of rising protectionism. He also spoke of the mission in Afghanistan and the importance of the training programs that the OSCE is promoting there. Noting that neither NATO nor a military response will bring stability to Afghanistan, Mr. Tanner emphasized the significance of a comprehensive approach and the role that the OSCE can play given that it is built on the principles of comprehensive security.
- President Soares welcomed the participating parliamentarians to the Winter Meeting.⁶ He noted that the OSCE's strength is its flexibility, and in light of the new challenges, needs to take advantage of its flexibility to remain engaged. He emphasized the responsibility that parliamentarians possess in facing these challenges, as demonstrated in the special debate on the Russia-Georgia conflict at the 2008 Fall Meetings in Toronto. He raised concerns about the politicization of conflict mediation efforts, such as that which led to the failure to extend the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. He was also concerned that the inter-governmental side of the OSCE lacks transparency and called for the consensus decision-making principle to be adjusted. President Soares also brought attention to issues that directly touch on the OSCE PA's activities, including the OSCE Secretariat's unilateral decision to not post on its website a press release issued by the OSCE PA regarding a visit to Moldova, and the violation of the Copenhagen Agreement which governs the relationship between the OSCE PA

⁶ <http://www.oscepa.org/images/stories/nats%20stuff/Soares%20opening%20speech%2019.02.09%20ENG.pdf>

and ODIHR in election observation missions, which occurred most recently in the 2008 US presidential elections.

- Ms Dora Bakoyannis, Greek Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman-in-Office, noted that the OSCE is the flagship institution for Euro-Atlantic security, and that the Parliamentary Assembly in its emphasis on dialogue and representing constituents plays a vital role. She outlined the priorities of her chairmanship which include a consensus solution to the conflict in Georgia, improving the OSCE's efficiency and effectiveness, anti-terrorism, border security, migration, climate change, gender equality, and cooperation between ODIHR and the OSCE PA. She also emphasized that the OSCE needs to apply the principles of modesty, consolidation, and making haste slowly when moving forward on discussions regarding future architecture of Euro-Atlantic security. These discussions will involve all of the stakeholders and will be hosted by the OSCE. Ms Bakoyannis also referred to the shadow of the economic crisis and its unpredictable future. She emphasized the need to consolidate the pillars of a rules-based international order, which includes the OSCE.⁷

C. General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

Chair: Mr. Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco)

Vice-Chair: Senator Consiglio Di Nino (Canada)

Rapporteur: Mr. Riccardo Migliori (Italy)

The General Committee heard presentations by two OSCE officials: Ms Mara Marinkai of Greece, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, and Ambassador Eric Lebedel of France, Chairman of the Forum for Security Cooperation. Ms Marinaki provided an overview of the work and structure of the Permanent Council. She emphasised the complementarity between the inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE. She raised concerns about the extent to which the OSCE was challenged by the conflict in Georgia which at the same time showed the unique advantage offered by the OSCE in conflict management among other institutions because of its flexibility and institutionalisation of dialogue. These features, she argued, are exemplified in the daily work of the Permanent Council.

Ambassador Lebedel described the work and structure of the FSC, which covers such matters as the Code of Conduct and Small Arms and cyber security. He raised concerns about the continuation of unsettled, or "frozen", conflicts in the OSCE area. He also outlined recent activities of the FSC and the OSCE's recent initiatives on a variety of security concerns, including in response to the situation in the Caucasus and the Gaza Strip.

The Rapporteur, Mr. Migliori, presented his concept paper on food sufficiency and food security in the OSCE area which he will submit as a formal report at the 18th Annual Session in Vilnius, Lithuania. His report will emphasise the need for greater commitment on the part of governments, parliaments and international institutions to

⁷ http://www.osce.org/documents/pdf_documents/2009/02/36346-1.pdf

address the issue and realising the objectives already set out. It will also present the OSCE as having a significant role in coordinating, moving forward and raising awareness.

Senator Di Nino, as Vice-Chair of the Committee, presented the Follow-up Report⁸ to the Astana Declaration, specifically action taken by the OSCE and the participating states individually on the regulation of private military and security companies, transparency in the OSCE and further OSCE reform, the banning of cluster munitions, addressing cyber crime, the security environment in Georgia, small arms and light weapons, and strengthening contributions to Afghanistan's security and stability. He also took advantage of the opportunity to elaborate on action taken by Canada on some of these areas.

D. General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment

Chair: Mr. Petros Efthymiou (Greece)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Roland Blum (France)

Rapporteur: Mr. Ivor Callely (Ireland)

The General Committee heard presentations by Mr. Goran Svilanovic, Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and Ambassador Werner Almhofer, the Head of the OSCE Mission to Kosovo. Mr. Svilanovic described the main priorities of his office which include migration issues, capacity and institution building. Sustainable environment and security are also paramount issues, above all in the context of climate change.

Ambassador Almhofer summed up the situation in Kosovo one year after the declaration of independence and outlined the main economic issues against the backdrop of the financial crisis. He acknowledged that as a small territory, Kosovo should benefit from a certain time lag before it is touched by the crisis, perhaps by way of a rising trade deficit, falling foreign direct investment and exports.

The Rapporteur, Mr. Callely, presented his concept paper on the financial and economic crisis, which he will submit as a formal report at the 18th Annual Session in Vilnius, Lithuania. His report will consider the effects of the current crisis on political and security concerns in the OSCE area. He emphasised that the economic meltdown already has affected societies, especially regarding social unrest that has spread since the onset of the financial crisis in many participating States.

Mr. Blum, as Vice-Chair of the Committee, presented the Follow-up Report⁹ to the Astana Declaration, specifically action taken by the OSCE and the participating states individually on climate change, water management, concrete action on the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, free trade in between North America and Europe as well as in the Mediterranean area, debt relief, and revenue transparency in the extractive industry.

⁸ <http://www.oscepa.org/images/stories/nats%20stuff/First%20Committee%20Follow-Up%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.oscepa.org/images/stories/nats%20stuff/Second%20Committee%20Follow-Up%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

E. General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Acting Chair: Ms. Walburga Habsburg-Douglas (Sweden)

Rapporteur: Ms. Natalia Karpovich (Russian Federation)

The General Committee heard presentations by Mr. Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Mr. Janez Lenarcic, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Mr. Haraszti listed many areas of concerns regarding freedom of the media in the OSCE area. In particular, he insisted that the practice of considering human rights and democracy are “relative” needs to stop since these are universal. He criticised the claims by some States that being held accountable for bad practices is an intrusion into “internal affairs.” He also brought up the obligation for all participating States to stop the intimidation and killing of journalists. He insisted that journalists ought not to be punished for upholding the principles of transparency and accountability.

Mr. Lenarcic noted that many of the issues that ODIHR deals with were topics dealt with by the Assembly in its earliest days. Given that ODIHR and the Assembly both recognise the importance of certain issues; he said that ODIHR is ready to support the PA in its activities. The potential for the two institutions to complement each others’ work is strong, he said, and that close cooperation would ensure that the OSCE would remain the world leader in election observation.

In the debate that followed, former PA President Alcee Hastings (United States) shared his views about the difficult relationship between the PA and ODIHR with respect to election observation, noting that ODIHR generally has deviated from the terms of the 1997 Copenhagen agreement in undermining the leadership of the PA in these activities. He went on to say, “We need to stop this divisiveness and get on with the critical business for the OSCE that allows for cooperation of the Parliamentary Assembly and ODIHR and Council of Europe and the NATO Assembly and anyone else that is interested in developing democracy as it pertains to elections.”

The Rapporteur, Ms Karpovich, presented her concept paper on which she will submit as a formal report at the 18th Annual Session in Vilnius, Lithuania. She expressed her appreciation for the fact that children’s rights had emerged as a priority for the OSCE PA. She also hopes to address common threats such as unresolved conflicts and refugees. She intends to discuss the effects of the world financial crisis on the social dimension, in particular focussing on labour migration and rising levels of unemployment and their impact on women.

The Acting Chair, Ms Habsburg-Douglas, presented the Follow-up Report¹⁰ to the Astana Declaration, specifically action taken by the OSCE and the participating states individually on combating the sexual exploitation of children, violence against women, developments in the improvement of gender balance, recognising the economic, cultural, political and social contributions of migrants, combating anti-Semitism, commemoration of the Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine, strengthening efforts to

¹⁰ <http://www.oscepa.org/images/stories/nats%20stuff/Third%20Committee%20Follow-Up%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

combat all forms of trafficking in human beings and addressing the special needs of child victims, and election observation missions.

F. Plenary: Special Debate on proposals for new European security architecture

In June 2008, the president of the Russian Federation, Dmitri Medvedev, proposed that a new set of principles for promoting European security be established that would serve as the basis for a new legally-binding security treaty.¹¹ French President Nicholas Sarkozy welcomed the initiative and has sought to contribute to the organization of such a discussion. The debate was opened up with remarks by Alexander Groushko, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, and Veronique Bujon-Barre, Deputy Director for Political and Security Affairs in the French Foreign Ministry, and involved almost 50 parliamentarians.

Mr. Groushko highlighted “the growing dissatisfaction with the state of security in the Euro-Atlantic region” and noted that “more and more voices [are] calling for a readjustment of the entire Euro-Atlantic security architecture in all its principal aspects.” He acknowledged that there are “different points of view as to how we should move forward” but pointed out that “the purpose of dialogue [is] to seek and find points of convergence.” He expressed the willingness of the Russian Federation “to do just that.”

Ms. Bujon-Barre emphasized “that any discussion on the renewal and the improvement of security on our continent has to be done in respect of the principles on which European security is currently based: the transatlantic bond, the preservation of existing institutions (NATO, OSCE, EU), a comprehensive view of security including the political and military dimensions as well as the human and the environmental dimensions, and respecting the Helsinki Final Act as well as the 1990 Charter of Paris.”

The spirited debate which followed these introductory remarks touched on various concerns regarding the proposal, such as that existing structures would be jeopardized and agreements already in place need to be valued. Arguments in support of the proposal noted that it could serve as a stimulus for future negotiations and disarmament efforts, as well as the alleviation of East-West tensions. It was widely agreed that the OSCE is the best forum for continued discussion of the issue.

G. Closing Plenary

During the closing session, the three General Committees heard the following presentations:

Special Representative on Gender Issues, Tone Tingsgaard, reminded Delegations of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which highlights the impact of war on women as well as women’s contributions to conflict resolution. Calling it a “cornerstone document,” Ms. Tingsgaard appealed to all participating States to put Resolution 1325 into practice. Ms. Tingsgaard also pointed out that far fewer women than men receive seconded

¹¹ The key elements of the proposed treaty would include basic principles of international law, including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity; inadmissibility of the use of force; an emphasis on negotiated settlements that take into account the positions of the different sides; guarantees of equal security; no state or international organization can have exclusive rights to maintaining peace and stability in Europe; new cooperation procedures regarding weapons proliferation, terrorism and drug trafficking.

positions within the OSCE and encouraged the Delegations to take measures in order to ensure that this imbalance is addressed. Furthermore, she emphasized the necessity for the OSCE Gender Action Plan to be properly implemented. Finally, the Special Representative observed that some OSCE PA Delegations were composed solely of men and announced that she has proposed a change to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure that seeks to alter this imbalance. Specifically, her proposed rule would restrict the voting rights of Delegations made up exclusively of one gender. She noted that a decision had been made to pass the proposal on to the Rules Committee for examination.

Panos Kammenos, who serves as Vice Minister of Mercantile Marine, Aegean & Island Policy in the Greek Government, made a special presentation on "Piracy as a New Security Threat." He emphasised the situation involving Somalia and the political, economic and social conditions that have facilitated piracy in its territorial waters and in the Gulf of Aden. The risk from piracy could harm important commercial routes that link the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean with the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Impeded humanitarian aid to Somalia could also result in flows of starving refugees trying to leave the country and would bring economic instability to neighbouring States as well as an increase in illegal immigration to Europe. The proliferation of incidents during the last two years has led to increased attention to the issue by a number of international bodies and organizations. In particular the Council of the International Maritime Organization has been addressing the issue. The United Nations Security Council has also adopted a number of resolutions to address the problem.

The Eighth Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA was brought to a close with brief remarks by the Chairs of the three General Committees, who summarized for the Joint Session the deliberations that took place in their respective Committees. Emphasis was placed on the plans of the Committee Rapporteurs in preparation for the upcoming Annual Session, which this year takes place in Vilnius, Lithuania from 29 June to 3 July. OSCE PA President Joao Soares thanked all Delegations for participating in the Winter Meeting. He also gave special thanks to the OSCE Secretariat and the interpreters for the invaluable support they provided to the Assembly in holding the meeting.

H. Activities of the Canadian Delegation

Every member of the Canadian delegation attended the plenary sessions and the General Committee meetings of the Winter Meeting. Every member also made statements at the Plenary and/or General Committee meetings:

- Senator Consiglio Di Nino, Head of the Delegation:
 - participated in the meeting of the Standing Committee, during which he:
 - recommended that, in light of the uncertain impact of the current financial crisis, that the OSCE PA exercise leadership and consider opportunities for reducing budgetary expenditures;
 - emphasised that the Afghanistan mission requires more troops from NATO countries in order to ease the burden carried by a few countries;

- carried out his duties as Vice-Chair of the meeting of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security by presenting the Follow-Up Report;
 - participated in the special debate on proposals for a new European Security architecture;
 - participated in the discussion about gender representation among national delegations to the OSCE PA; and,
 - met bilaterally with the head of the Lithuanian delegation to the OSCE PA, Mrs. Vilija Aleknaite-Abramikiene.
- Senator Jerry Grafstein:
 - carried out his duties as Vice-President of the OSCE PA; in this respect, he participated in the meeting of the Standing Committee, during which he raised concerns about the impact of the financial crisis on the economies of the OSCE PA;
 - participated in the special debate on proposals for a new European Security architecture; and,
 - participated in the debates in the meeting of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, specifically raising concerns about protectionism as a response to the global financial crisis.
- Mr. David Tilson, M.P.:
 - spoke on Canada’s accomplishments in Afghanistan during the meeting of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security; and,
 - spoke on the importance of promoting free trade in the meeting of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.
- Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.:
 - made a statement during the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions about the importance of training programs for those left recently unemployed or vulnerable by financial crisis.
- Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal, M.P.:
 - made a statement during the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions about the importance of avoiding xenophobia and the negative treatment of migrants and minorities in the context of the global financial crisis; and,
 - raised several questions during debates in the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.

On arrival in Vienna on Wednesday, 18 February, the complete delegation met with the Canadian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Fredericka Gregory; counsellor – OSCE Human Dimension, Yves Beaulieu; counsellor – Political/Economic and Public Affairs, Jennifer May; counsellor – OSCE Political-Military Dimension, John Gosal; counsellor – OSCE Budget, OSCE Economic and Environment Dimension, Alexandre-Etienne Michon, for a briefing session at the Canadian embassy on the main issues in Canada-Austrian relations and Canada-OSCE relations. The briefing also included a discussion about proposals for a new European Security architecture. It should be noted that such a briefing by the Canadian embassy was the first ever with the parliamentary delegation; the parliamentarians agreed that the briefings and interactions with the Canadian embassy were invaluable and should be regularised as part of future programs related to the Winter Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. David Tilson, 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	8 th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
DESTINATION	Vienna, Austria
DATES	February 19-20, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Consiglio Di Nino and Senator Jerahmiel Grafstein
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal, M.P., Mr. Dean Allison, M.P. and Mr. David Tilson, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. François Michaud and Mrs. Natalie Mychajlyszyn
TRANSPORTATION	\$30,455.31
ACCOMMODATION	\$6,713.88
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$2,385.10
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$129.56
TOTAL	\$39,683.85