**OSCE PA**

**Press Release**

**Security committee to debate larger OSCE role in N. Africa**

*Food security, OSCE transparency also on committee agenda*

COPENHAGEN, 27 June 2011—The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe should provide assistance when asked in the fields of democracy and human rights in North Africa, according to a proposed resolution released today by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

“With the rapid change we are seeing in our partner countries of Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere, the time is now for the OSCE to step up and lend its considerable experience to countries who seek help to build democratic institutions,” said Tonino Picula (Croatia), rapporteur of the politico-security committee and author of the resolution.

The Parliamentary Assembly’s Committee on Political Affairs and Security will consider the resolution at the Belgrade Annual Session beginning 6 July under the theme “Strengthening the OSCE’S Effectiveness and Efficiency – A New Start After the Astana Summit.”

The resolution is being considered for inclusion in the Assembly’s Belgrade Declaration, which helps shape OSCE and national policy. Parliamentarians from more than 50 countries will vote on the resolution and declaration in Belgrade.

**A More Effective OSCE through international cooperation**

The committee’s draft resolution calls for strengthening cooperation with the United Nations, European Union and others. Specifically, the resolution identified food security as a “new and major challenge” deserving of priority treatment within the OSCE.

“This resolution should be the impetus for action in all our parliaments,” said Karl-Georg Wellmann (Germany), committee chairman. “With high food prices forcing millions of people into poverty, our countries must act to keep agricultural prices in check and fund rural development that balances food and energy demands.”

**A More Efficient OSCE though transparency and accountability**

To ensure greater transparency and accountability, the OSCE’s decision making body, the Permanent Council should allow public and the press to attend its meetings, the resolution says.

“We live in world that demands more visible examples of multilateral diplomacy in action,” Mr. Picula said. “OSCE meetings need to be open to the public to raise the profile of this important work.”

The resolution also recommends modifying the consensus rule for OSCE decision-making, at least for decisions related to personnel, budget and administration. The resolution would encourage the OSCE to employ outside, independent, professional auditors and to make the audits available to the OSCE PA.

The Belgrade Annual Session, including committee debates and votes, are open to the press and public. The session runs 6-10 July 2011. For more information on the Annual Session, click [here](http://www.oscepa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1006:twentieth-annual-session-belgrade-2011&catid=36:annual-sessions&Itemid=64).

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is comprised of 320 parliamentarians from 55 countries spanning, Europe, Central Asia and North America. The Assembly provides a forum for parliamentary diplomacy, monitors elections, and strengthens international cooperation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

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