

**NATO-RUSSIA  
PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE**

222 SCRF 04 E  
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**NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

**MINUTES**

NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee meeting  
Palazzo del Casino, Lido, Venice, Italy

Friday 12 November 2004

## ATTENDANCE LIST

### Speakers

Solomon Passy, Foreign Affairs Minister, Bulgaria  
and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE

Alcee L. Hastings, President, OSCE Parliamentary  
Assembly

### Vice-Presidents

Giovanni Lorenzo Forcieri (Italy)  
Pierre Lellouche (France)  
John Tanner (United States)

### Treasurer

Lothar Ibrügger (Germany)

### Secretary General

Simon Lunn

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Estonia  
Germany

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Franco Angioni  
Aleksandrs Kirssteins  
Gediminas Kirkilas  
Algirdas Gričius

Greece  
Italy  
Latvia  
Lithuania

Marc Angel  
Jos van Gennip  
Marian Pilka  
Jaime Gama  
Lubov Sliska  
Victor A. Ozerov  
Jozef Banáš  
Rafael Estrella  
Vahit Erdem  
Egemen Bağış  
Lord Clark of Windermere  
Michael Bilirakis

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### Committees

Civil Dimension of Security  
Economics and Security  
Political

Alice Mahon (United Kingdom), Chairperson  
Paul E. Gillmor (United States), Chairman  
Peter Viggers (United Kingdom), Chairman

**SECRETARIES OF DELEGATION*****Member Delegations***

Belgium  
 Bulgaria  
 Canada  
 Czech Republic  
 Estonia  
 France  
  
 Germany  
 Greece  
 Hungary  
 Italy  
 Latvia  
 Luxembourg  
 Netherlands  
 Poland  
 Portugal  
 Russian Federation  
  
 Slovakia  
 Spain  
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 United Kingdom

Frans Van Melkebeke  
 Borislav Penchev  
 Denis Robert  
 Olga Bendíková  
 Tania Espe  
 Frédéric Taillet  
 Etienne Sallenave  
 Rainer Büscher  
 Roxani Xeplati  
 Károly Tüzes  
 Alessandra Lai  
 Sandra Paura  
 Isabelle Barra  
 Leo van Waasbergen  
 Mikolaj Karlowski  
 Luisa Pinto Basto  
 Oleg Melnikov  
 Viacheslav Kolotvin  
 Iva Stenová  
 Mercedes Araújo  
 Cazibe Yapici  
 Tracey Garratty

***Associate Delegations***

Azerbaijan  
 Georgia

Rahim Akhundov  
 Archil Osidze

**Accompanying the member delegations**

Belgium  
 France  
 Germany  
  
 Greece  
 Italy  
  
 Poland  
 Russian Federation  
  
  
  
 Spain  
  
 United States

Patrick Delodder  
 Sylvie Bizzozzero  
 Johannes von Ahlefeldt  
 Waltraud Anna Weiland  
 Vassiliki Ioannidou  
 Pia Califano  
 Giovanni Brauzzi  
 Kamil Mikliszanski  
 Yury Gorlatch  
 Alexander Grigoriev  
 Nikola Kaloudov  
 Sergey Khrushkov  
 Alexei Meshkov  
 Alexander Voronin  
 Olga Yakovleva  
 Mariano Daranas  
 Araceli Quintano  
 John Lis  
 Darrel Adams

**European Parliament**

Dag Sourander

**Interparliamentary Assembly**

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Spencer Oliver, Secretary General

Gustavo Pallares  
Vanessa Griddine

**Accompanying staff**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria

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**International Secretariat**

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Raphaëlle Mathey  
Susan Millar  
Ruxandra Popa  
Jacqueline Pforr  
Steffen Sachs  
Zachary Selden  
Svitlana Svetova

**Minute Writer**

Chris Shaw

The meeting opened on Friday 12 November 2004 at 2.45 pm with Mr Giovanni Lorenzo Forcieri, Vice-President of the NATO PA, in the Chair.

**1. Opening of the proceedings**

The Vice-President welcomed delegates and apologised for the absence of the President.

**2. Adoption of the draft agenda [211 SCRF 04 E]**

The draft Agenda was adopted.

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee held in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, on Friday, 28 May 2004 [105 SCRF 04 E]**

The Vice-President thanked the members of the Slovak delegation for a memorable meeting in Bratislava.

The Minutes were adopted.

**4. The situation in the Caucasus**

- Address by **H.E. Mr Solomon Passy**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria and Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Comments by **Hon. Alcee L. Hastings**, President, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The Vice-President noted that the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee had been established to improve cooperation between Russia and NATO and said that the meeting would focus on the South Caucasus. This was a troubled neighbourhood and an important centre for oil. It was therefore in everyone's interests to promote stability there. The apparent calm in the region could be adversely affected by internal social and political problems or by external factors such as terrorism and increased military activity. Engagement was needed in order to mitigate any adverse effects of such problems. The Assembly was following NATO's example in focusing on this issue.

He introduced Mr Passy, an early advocate of NATO membership and Foreign Minister of Bulgaria since 2001. He also introduced Mr Hastings; President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since July 2004 and a congressman for Florida since 1992.

Mr Passy said that the Committee had added a much needed parliamentary dimension to the NATO-Russian dialogue which was an essential feature of the international security architecture. He hoped that two elements of the partnership would be developed further: (a) an open political dialogue which could address the sensitive issues, and (b) practical cooperation in recognition of the fact that the Black Sea region was of importance to international security.

Continuing, Mr Passy said that both NATO and OSCE were pursuing the same goal in seeking to resolve recent conflicts in the region. The role of the OSCE's order monitoring team along the Georgian-Russian frontier had been very positive, but was now subject to future discussions. Cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was to be welcomed. He hoped that the process would not become entangled. A constructive and pragmatic approach was needed, with maximum restraint and flexibility on both sides. Two prominent

Bulgarian statesmen had been appointed OSCE Special Envoys to Nagorno-Karabakh and to Abkhazia.

Mr Passy also said that when Bulgaria took over the OSCE chairmanship in August 2003 there had been a stalemate over the conflict in Transdniestria. Bulgaria had instigated four rounds of talks, leading in June 2004 to the decision by Moldova to adhere to the mediators' document. The mediators were ready to organize further consultations, but since March 2004 there had been no withdrawals of arms and on occasion access to Transdniestria had been denied. Progress in the implementation of the Istanbul Commitments would help to achieve the ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty.

Finally, Mr Passy said that his general impression was that all of these conflicts had one feature in common. The parties were delaying coming to a lasting solution in the hope that this delay would benefit them. History showed however that such tactics did not work: all parties lost. Complex situations needed complex solutions in which the commitment of NATO and the OSCE would be of great assistance. The NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee, by reaching agreement on this issue, would provide a solid basis for consensus among participating states.

**The Vice-President** thanked Solomon Passy and gave the floor to Mr Hastings.

**Mr Hastings** (OSCE PA) thanked the Vice-President and the Italian hosts. He was honoured to participate. Mr Passy had provided incredible leadership within the OSCE. Dialogue between Russia, NATO and the OSCE was more important than ever given their mutual interests in the Caucasus. A text describing the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's activities in the Caucasus would be distributed to Delegates. He would be complementing Mr Passy's address.

The situation in the Caucasus was not unique but rather sadly familiar: a struggle for peace, stability and sustainable prosperity. Parliamentarians struggled to provide these same things for their constituents, but erred in thinking that repeatedly talking about the problem would lead to solutions. Parliamentarians needed to influence and shape the exercise of national power and to understand how the exercise of this power impacted on neighbours and on the wider world.

He paid tribute to the President and his wife Louise for their tremendous contribution both in the USA and in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and he wished the President well at the Asia Foundation.

NATO and the OSCE needed to cooperate. They had a common space and a common responsibility in a large part of the world. They operated where soft security and hard security issues met and overlapped. The twin towers and Beslan showed how much was shared in common in the war against terror. The enemy needed to be defeated wherever he was in the world. The OSCE and NATO Parliamentary Assemblies were the democratic foundation for the wider international organizations. Mr Hastings would take the wisdom of the meeting with him to Moscow.

**Mr Erdem** (TR) asked why the international community was not more active in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

**Mr Hastings** noted that both Armenia and Azerbaijan were very active within the OSCE and that that organization had very frequently discussed the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. He suggested that regional intervention might be helpful and noted that frozen conflicts remained frozen because no one wanted to be thawed out first.

**Mr Passy** agreed with the comments of Mr Hastings on the need for stronger involvement of the international community. He noted that many organisations had already been involved in seeking a

resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem but noted that ultimately a resolution depended upon the strength of political will of the two sides involved.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) stressed the importance that Russia attached to the South Caucasus and in particular to the eradication of terrorism and the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. She stressed that Russia was very interested in the intervention of NATO in the region and said that any approach needed to be cautious in order to avoid reactivating old conflicts. She called for intervention by NATO to be transparent and predictable and with an equitable approach adapted to the interests of all parties. She asked why Georgia and Moldova had not ratified the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty.

**Mr Lellouche** (FR) reported from his recent visit to the Caucasus his impressions of a region facing complex problems involving oil, Islamic terrorism and a patchwork of ethnic and national conflicts. He shared the desire of Russia to combat terrorism and he called for Russia to give full cooperation to help resolve conflicts in the region. He described an ongoing black market in the region with external protection. He drew attention to Russia's demand for an end to OSCE border controls in South Ossetia and voiced support for the OSCE's role along the North-South Caucasus border. He said that the situation in Abkhazia was very worrying and asked why the removal and killing of Georgians there had not been addressed. He requested Russian reassurance as to the continuing role of the OSCE and Russian readiness to resolve the problems in the region. Finally, he supported the accession of Turkey to the EU and hoped that an open border between Turkey and Armenia would help promote the Armenian economy and reduce tension with Azerbaijan.

**Mr Passy** replied that he could not predict what would happen at the next OSCE Ministerial meeting as decisions required a consensus of all 55 member states.

**Mr Hastings** said that ratification of the CFE Treaty was a matter for Georgia and Moldova but asked if there was anything else that the OSCE could do in this respect.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) thanked Mr Lellouche for his objective assessment of the situation and stressed that Russia could not be accused of instigating conflict in the region. She said that the proposed withdrawal of Russian bases from Georgia had not met with an adequate response from Georgia. She also said that the removal of some ammunition from Moldova had not been allowed to continue by the leadership of the Transdniestrian Republic but would be discussed again. She said Russia too strove for a transparent, predictable and stable South Caucasus. She asked Mr Lellouche to expand on his comments about a black market in South Ossetia.

**Mr van Gennip** (NL) said that energy security was necessary for economic growth and for security at large. He asked whether the fact that the Caucasus was becoming indispensable for energy provision would lead to greater tension or to greater cooperation.

**Mr Hastings** said that how energy impacted on human dimension was a vital question, for which more regional approaches would be helpful, but he also thought that access to drinkable fresh water was a potential cause of major conflict.

**Mr Bağış** (TR) noted that Mr Lellouche had referred to Islamic terrorism. He thought it better to refer to extremist terror or religious terror. Mr Lellouche had also invited Turkey to open its borders with Armenia, but Armenia did not officially recognise the existing borders or sovereignty rights of the state of Turkey. Turkey however wanted good relations with all its neighbours. Today was a historic day for the Middle East. The funeral of President Arafat would hopefully usher in a new era of peace.

**Alice Mahon** (UK) noted that in September the Committee for the Civil Dimension of Security had visited the Caucasus. Her heart went out to the Russian people in the wake of the Beslan atrocity. She asked Mr Passy to expand on his comments about the activities of the Minsk Group.

**Mr Passy** said that the Minsk Group was a very serious and expert group. Many of the suggestions which he had proposed had been rejected by the Minsk Group because they had already been explored. Without good will, an imposed solution was impossible.

**Mr Gama** (PT) said that unlike elsewhere in the world there had been no progress in the Caucasus. Terrorist and military activity was increasing. There was a lack of regional dialogue and economic conditions were bad. More international monitoring was needed, but he was very sceptical about progress.

**Mr Ozerov** (RU) said that Mrs Sliska's view had been not only her own but that of the Russian Parliament. There were many ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in the Caucasus. Russia therefore had an interest in seeing peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the region. Russia was making great efforts to bring all sides together, including through the Caucasian Quartet. Russia never questioned the territorial integrity of states in the Southern Caucasus. OSCE observers had never been asked to leave zones controlled by Russian peacekeepers. The presence of OSCE observers was important, but the absence of Russian peacekeepers would be catastrophic. He invited the OSCE to move beyond observation and to reach political conclusions. He noted that Georgia's statement to fire on any boat in the Black Sea had not been criticised by the OSCE.

**Mr Hastings** asked how the OSCE might improve its activities in the Caucasus. He noted that working groups were not even able to gain access to Abkhazia.

**Mr Passy** was optimistic about the future of the Caucasus. The Balkans was a good example of how a situation could change for the better and stabilize where the focus of the international community was applied. With the expansion of the EU and NATO, international attention would focus on the Caucasus.

**Mr Lellouche** (FR) responded to the Turkish delegation that the use of the phrase "Islamic terrorism" was not an insult to the religion but merely a recognition that acts of terrorism were being carried out in the name of the Muslim faith, albeit by a minority. He said that he was reassured by the welcome that Mr Ozerov had given to the continuing presence of the OSCE in border monitoring. He emphasised that he had seen himself the evidence of contraband from Russia being stored in South Ossetia and then distributed in the region and called for this problem to be addressed. Local authorities opposed OSCE monitoring of the tunnel. The OSCE was unable to enter Abkhazia and was not respected in South Ossetia. Nonetheless, he favoured working together to resolve these problems, as was done in the Balkans.

**Mr Estrella** (ES) recalled the former role of NATO in the South Caucasus but recognised the primacy of the OSCE in the region. He was not as optimistic as Mr Passy about the situation there but welcomed the willingness of Russia to engage with the international community in a dialogue about conflict resolution in the Southern Caucasus.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) noted that Abkhazia and South Ossetia were non-recognised republics and had the right to engage in economic activity with other parties. She agreed that if there were criminal organisations in Russia engaging in black market trading there were measures that should be taken to stop it. She also pointed out that Russia had strategic interests in the region that should be acknowledged in any dialogue.



**Mr Angioni** (IT) said that the big problem was in turning the existing peace-keeping forces in the region into genuine international peace-keeping forces. He regretted the absence of a UN presence and asked, in the absence of progress, what could be done. Mr Passy replied that the answer was to negotiate.

## **5. Miscellaneous**

**Lord Clark** (UK) welcomed the fact that Russian delegates had been given multiple opportunities to respond during the meeting but asked if it might be possible for Russian delegates to present a paper at future meeting in order to enable others to respond.

**The Vice-President** welcomed this good suggestion. He thanked the speakers and colleagues for their participation and hoped that the rest of the session would run smoothly.

**He closed the meeting at 4.32 pm.**

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