



## The President

To: Heads of OSCE PA Delegations  
Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

CC: Secretaries of OSCE PA Delegations

24 June 2010

Dear Colleague,

You will likely have seen recent communications regarding the reappointment of Spencer Oliver as our Secretary General. Indeed, I think that many of us have been contacted by diplomats from Latvia, campaigning on behalf of Artis Pabriks. While I would prefer not to add to the many letters circulating, I feel that, as President, I must stand up for the independence of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I support the renewal of Spencer Oliver's mandate for several reasons, but most importantly his tireless work on behalf of the Assembly to maintain it as a strong and independent OSCE Institution. There is a clear campaign against Spencer among some diplomats in Vienna, who apparently blame him for his vocal advocacy of OSCE PA policies. Some of these diplomats in Vienna object to our attempts to increase the transparency within the Permanent Council and the OSCE Secretariat, and our unwillingness to have our body of elected parliamentarians treated as subordinate to OSCE civil servants. Spencer has been a permanent thorn in the side of some OSCE diplomats simply because he has fought for these objectives and because Spencer and the Secretariat provide us with an alternate source of information on happenings in the Permanent Council. The recent suggestion that we contact our Ambassadors in Vienna is clear evidence of another attempted assault on our parliamentary independence.

In his recent letter, I was disappointed to hear our colleague Janis Eglitis repeat the often stated accusation that Spencer Oliver has been the root cause of tension between our Assembly and the ODIHR. Having been involved in every major Assembly decision in recent years, and having led many OSCE election observation missions, I cannot help but be offended by the suggestion that I or any of my colleagues have been manipulated by Spencer into taking positions that do not conform to ODIHR assessments of various elections. I can assure you that the reasons for the tension comes from ODIHR's failure to abide by our Co-operation Agreement and from attempts by ODIHR bureaucrats to usurp the decision-making role that should be fulfilled by parliamentarians in the observation of elections. I and many of our colleagues in the Bureau have fought hard against these attempts. Spencer has also often had to fight against these attempts on our behalf, and it is for precisely this reason that they and some of the diplomats in Vienna object to his reappointment. He has done an excellent job, and there is no one more qualified to continue as Secretary General, fighting for the Parliamentary Assembly's independence. The selection of a Secretary General should not be allowed to turn into a political fight, since the position is primarily administrative in

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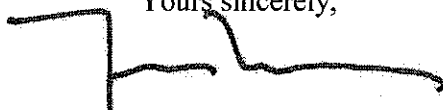
nature. While Spencer's advice and counsel has proved valuable to all of us, and his experience and expertise is well-known and recognized, it is the Secretary General's job to implement and carry out the political decisions made by the Assembly and its leadership. Spencer has always fulfilled this duty faithfully, carrying out our decisions effectively. In the interests of maintaining an independent and influential Parliamentary Assembly, we should continue to make use of his expertise.

As has been previously communicated, it is my intention to ask for the renewal of the term of our Secretary General by majority vote of the Standing Committee in Oslo, in accordance with Paragraph 40-1 of our Rules of Procedure, precisely as has been done on previous occasions. The last time that we took this decision was under President Alcee Hastings' leadership during our 2005 Annual Session in Washington.

Finally, I note that there have been several proposals put forward to amend our Rules of Procedure, including ones regarding the appointment of the Secretary General. Several Heads of Delegations have indicated to me that they do not believe that this is the correct time to revise the rules that relate to appointment of the Secretary General. As rules changes require consensus-minus-one, such changes are therefore impossible at this time. While I do not in principle object to revisiting these procedures, I also believe that it is not appropriate to change our rules while such a campaign is taking place. As a result of these and other proposals, and in conformity with Rule 45-2, I have asked our Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure to examine the various proposals put forward. I expect that this work will continue after my mandate as President has come to an end. I therefore welcome the stated willingness of Presidential candidates Petros Efthymiou and Consiglio Di Nino to continue deliberations on proposed changes within the Rules Committee, after the Annual Session in Oslo.

I look forward to seeing you all in Oslo, and hope that we can focus on the many substantive issues that have been put forward for our consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'João Soares', with a stylized, somewhat jagged and horizontal line extending to the right.

João Soares