

27 Apr 2006 -13:50

## Visit OSCE Chairman to Albania

The OSCE Chairman-in Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, held talks in Tirana with President Alfred Moisiu, Prime Minister Sali Berisha and Foreign Minister Besnik Mustafaj.

The OSCE Chairman-in Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, held talks in Tirana with President Alfred Moisiu, Prime Minister Sali Berisha and Foreign Minister Besnik Mustafaj.

OSCE Chairman raises rule of law, democratic institutions and economic development with Albanian authorities; urges resumed work on electoral reform TIRANA, 26 April 2006 - The OSCE Chairman-in Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, held talks in Tirana with President Alfred Moisiu, Prime Minister Sali Berisha and Foreign Minister Besnik Mustafaj. The OSCE Chairman called on Albanian leaders to re-start the election reforms and urged them to implement the recommendations of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) following the 2005 Parliamentary elections. He also pledged the OSCE's support in this process. "We would like to emphasize the need to continue the electoral reform before the upcoming elections. The implementation requires a strong commitment by the Albanian authorities at all levels and an active participation of Albanian citizens," Minister De Gucht said during his visit yesterday. ODIHR has emphasized the need for a centralized and reliable civil registration system. Important issues are the voters' addresses and ID cards. The Chairman-in-Office also encourages the Albanian authorities to strengthen the functioning of democratic institutions. "Separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers, as well as independence of Parliament, are fundamental principles of democracy," he said. "Encouraging a constructive opposition is also a duty of the majority." He stressed that free and independent media are cornerstone of OSCE policy and urged the Albanian government to develop a legal framework consistent with international practice in this field. The Chairman-in Office commended the Albanian Government on its efforts in the fight against organized crime and corruption, and urged it to intensify these efforts. "An accountable and transparent judiciary and an efficient prosecution are crucial," the Minister said. "Rule of law and security are also crucial to economic development," he added. Minister De Gucht also congratulated Albania on the imminent signature of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, saying it would provide further impetus for reform. "The OSCE also welcomes Albania's constructive role in the region, including its support for the resolution of Kosovo's status through a negotiated process," the Chairman-in-Office concluded.

FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development  
Cooperation - Press service (P&C/P)  
Rue des Petits Carmes 15  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
+32 2 501 81 11  
<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

Karl Lagatie  
Spokesperson  
+32 477 40 32 12  
[Karl.Lagatie@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:Karl.Lagatie@diplobel.fed.be)

Arnaud Gaspart  
Deputy spokesperson  
+32 2 501 87 66  
[Arnaud.Gaspart@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:Arnaud.Gaspart@diplobel.fed.be)