

## ***Farewell ceremony for Freimut Duve, first OSCE-Representative on Freedom of the Media***

11 December 2003

### **Guests:**

Monica Nagler-Wittgenstein, Member of the Board of *Writers in Prison*, Sweden  
Miroslava Gongadze, journalist, Ukraine/USA, widow of Georgiy Gongadze, editor of *Ukrainskaya Pravda* and posthum-prizewinner of the *OSCE-Journalism and Democracy Prize 2001*

Nenad Popovic, Secretary General of P.E.N Croatia

Andrej Babitsky, Radio Free Europe, Russia, winner of the OSCE-Journalism and Democracy Prize 2002

Darko Petrovki, Mobile Cultural Container

Anna Politkovskaya, journalist, recipient of the OSCE-Journalism and Democracy Prize, and Rita Süßmuth, member of German *Bundestag* and former President of the German *Bundestag*, sent letters of greetings

### **Speakers:**

Franz Vranitzky, former Austrian Federal Chancellor and President of the Bruno Kreisky Forum

Ambassador Justus de Visser, chairman of the Permanent Council and PrepCom of the OSCE.

Freimut Duve, first OSCE-Representative on Freedom of the Media

### **Moderator:**

Rubina Möhring, journalist, chair of *Reporters Without Borders* Austria

### **Music:**

Monoblue Quartet

(jointly organised with Chairmanship 2003, Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the OSCE and Reporters Without Borders)

"Freedom of expression is a fundamental and internationally recognised human right and a basic component of a democratic society. Free, independent and pluralistic media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government."

Based on these fundamental principles, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna agreed on the mandate of the OSCE-Representative on Freedom of the Media in November 1997. Being the third institution of the OSCE apart from the High Commissioner for National Minorities in the Hague and the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw.

A Nobel Prize laureate, the German novelist Günther Grass, provided the logo for this new institution and its first Representative, which is being used for all the Office's publications; the hand of the writer; holding a quill, arising from the rubble after thirty devastating years of war; conjuring up the future: It represents freedom of the world, the significance of the maxim, the width of its goals and the commitment to a modern democracy. It points to the future which this Office represents.

The term of office of the first OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media expired in December 2003. Ending six years of pioneer work in this unique institution, which had been decisively shaped by its first representative, the German politician Freimut Duve.

Franz Vranitzky opened the gathering by stating that the evening was devoted to Freimut Duve's accomplishments and personality, devoted to an individual who wrote his own history.

Justus de Visser stressed that Freimut Duve had to fulfill an important mission, had to fight the battle for the free media which are essential to democracy and freedom. Nenad Popovic contributed by reading a list of murdered journalists. Miroslava Gongadze described the important role and exceptional integrity of Freimut Duve after the disappearance of her husband. Andrej Babitsky emphasized the character and courage of Freimut Duve. In concluding the evening, Freimut Duve explained how it came to the creation of the Mobile Culture Container and how he developed his idea of "In Defence of Our Future".