

Barbara Prammer



REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
National Council
The President

Excellency,

Dear colleague,

I am writing to ask for your support at a crucial moment in the international campaign aiming at the abolition of cluster munitions. These terrifying weapons have caused unacceptable suffering in numerous countries all over the world. Having been designed for strictly military purposes these weapons are nowadays used to cause anxiety among the civilian population. In addition, cluster munitions pose a deadly threat to the population even years after their military use.

On the occasion of the Oslo conference last February 46 countries committed themselves to conclude a legally binding international agreement that will address the grave problems posed by cluster munitions.

Bearing in mind that Parliaments can play a crucial role in the process of banning these dreadful weapons, Anne-Marie Lizin, at that time President of the Senate of Belgium and I had asked for your support in this matter some months ago. I was encouraged by the many positive replies I received to my letter.

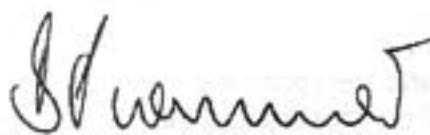
Signifying an increasing momentum in the campaign, at the Lima Conference last May 27 new states participated in the Oslo Process for the first time, most of them making explicit statements endorsing the Oslo declaration.

As you might be aware the next full meeting in the Oslo Process will be held in Vienna from 5 to 7 December 2007. To coordinate parliamentary activities in this respect I have the pleasure to invite up to two members of your parliament to participate in an International Parliamentary Forum for the ban of cluster munitions to be held in Vienna on Tuesday, 4 December 2007, 9:00 - 12:30 hrs. A multi-institutional forum organized by civil society will be held in the afternoon of that day.

Detailed information will be distributed as soon as possible. I am confident that this meeting will give further impetus to the world-wide efforts in the fight against cluster munitions.

Finally let me express my gratitude for the support extended so far for this initiative. I am looking forward to welcoming parliamentarians of your country in Vienna who are contributing actively to the process leading to an abolition of these harmful weapons.

Sincerely yours,



Barbara Prammer
President of the Nationalrat of Austria