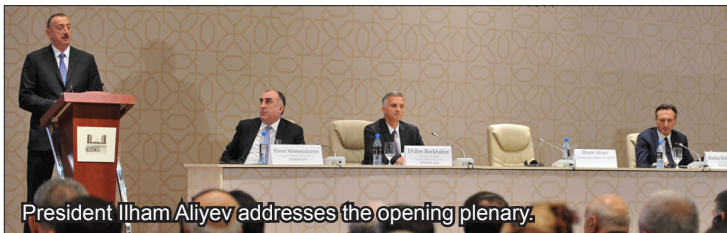


Session opens with addresses by Azerbaijani President, OSCE Chair-in-Office



President Ilham Aliyev addresses the opening plenary.

The 23rd OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Annual Session began on Saturday with keynote addresses by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan Ogtay Asadov, Swiss Confederation President and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter, and OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic.

“Political reforms will be a top priority on our agenda for coming years,” said President Aliyev. “We need to do more – to implement more reforms. I’m sure our commitment and co-operation with international institutions, such as the OSCE, will allow us to implement what we have planned.”

The President referred to the ongoing conflict concerning Nagorno-Karabakh and the necessity to ensure the implementation of resolutions agreed by international bodies, including the OSCE. Speaker Asadov echoed these sentiments, calling for the OSCE to prioritize its efforts to help settle the region’s conflicts. In his address to the Assembly, Burkhalter welcomed the Parliamentary Assembly’s role in promoting critical dialogue across the OSCE area and its work to help to Organization “win the best of all fights – the fight for freedom,

the fight for security, and the fight for peace.”

After his remarks, Burkhalter answered direct questions from the floor by OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Chris Smith (United States), Special Representative on South Caucasus and former President Joao Soares (Portugal), and Vice-Presidents Isabel Pozuelo (Spain) and Doris Barnett (Germany). The CiO responded to each question in detail and concluded his appearance by praising the Parliamentary Assembly as an important OSCE Institution.

President Krivokapic, in his address, stated that the OSCE had reached a “crossroads” at which it must fully realize that “security and co-operation are inseparable.” He noted that there is no bigger priority for the OSCE than restoring peace and security in Ukraine, and urged parliamentarians to “demonstrate our primary strength: the steadfast commitment to bridge our differences and reach mutual understanding.”

In the second plenary session later in the afternoon, PA delegates heard addresses by Speaker of the Russian State Duma Sergey Naryshkin and Ukrainian Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Koshulynskiy, who focused their remarks on the situation in Ukraine. Speaker Naryshkin pointed out that the Ukraine crisis is a test for the ideals of the OSCE, noting that all ten principles of the Helsinki Final Act are equally important. Deputy Speaker Koshulynskiy stressed the importance of the OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission, emphasizing that its work is complementary to the peace plan of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

13 Supplementary Items referred to General Committees; one to be debated in Plenary



President Ranko Krivokapic opens the Standing Committee meeting.

The OSCE PA’s Standing Committee on Saturday approved 14 items for debate during the Annual Session. With one moved from the Second Committee to the Third, the Standing

Committee agreed to allocate, in total, four supplementary items to the First Committee, three to the Second Committee, and six to the Third Committee. One supplementary item, on Russia’s actions in Ukraine, will be debated in the plenary, despite a challenge to the resolution from Russian Delegation.

The Standing Committee heard reports from the leaders of recent election observation missions, President Ranko Krivokapic (Montenegro), and Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), who informed the committee of the Assembly’s financial health. An adjustment of 1.1 per cent was proposed and agreed to unanimously. Secretary General Spencer Oliver discussed the OSCE PA’s ongoing Helsinki +40 Project, and

noted that the final recommendations of the four seminars planned for the upcoming year will be presented at the 24th Annual Session in Helsinki. Oliver also reported on difficulties with the OSCE/ODIHR during the recent Ukraine election observation mission and stressed the need for national delegations to step forward to host future Annual Sessions.

The Standing Committee also heard about preparations for the OSCE PA’s 2014 Autumn Meeting, to be held 3-5 October in Geneva, with President Krivokapic noting that the city will serve as an ideal venue for the meeting.

Delegates raised several important issues during the course of the meeting, including the necessity for resolving protracted conflicts and the possibility of expanding the capacity of the Special Representative on the South Caucasus in that regard.

Programme - Sunday, 29 June

09.00 – 10.30	First Committee (<i>Grand Ballroom II</i>)
09.00 – 10.30	Second Committee (<i>Grand Ballroom I</i>)
11.00 – 12.30	Third Committee (<i>Grand Ballroom II</i>)
14.30 – 17.00	Special Debate: The Rise of Extremism, Radicalism & Xenophobia: Challenges for the OSCE Region (<i>Grand Ballroom II</i>)