

REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ELEVENTH WINTER MEETING VIENNA, AUSTRIA 23-24 FEBRUARY 2012



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Prepared by the International Secretariat of the OSCE PA

REPORT ON THE 2012 WINTER MEETING OF THE OSCE PARLAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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Summary



Since February 2002, the OSCE PA has held an annual Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna. The Winter Meeting provides an opportunity for the three General Committees to hold discussions and be briefed by high-level OSCE officials. The meeting also serves as an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear presentations by the three committee rapporteurs and to discuss their draft reports for the upcoming Annual Session. The Winter Meeting is the second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar.

Bringing together 241 parliamentarians from 54 OSCE participating States, plus several from the Mediterranean Partners, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 11th Winter Meeting opened on 23 February in Vienna with a meeting of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.

In his address to the opening joint session, Assembly President Petros Efthymiou spoke of the need for governments to respect the rule of law, particularly in prison systems, and called for better protection of freedom online.

President of the Austrian Parliament Barbara Prammer called on the parliamentarians to protect and strengthen OSCE commitments, while OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier highlighted the need to strengthen relations between the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE's executive structures.

In the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, chaired by Serhiy Shevchuk (Ukraine), parliamentarians debated the economic and financial crisis in Europe. The meeting of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, chaired by Karl-Georg Wellmann (Germany), included a discussion on the fight against terrorism and crime with briefings by UN and OSCE officials.

The committees also heard presentations by rapporteurs on their plans for resolutions and reports for the Annual Session in Monaco, as

well as follow-up reports from the vice-chairs on developments related to the 2011 Belgrade Declaration.

The Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations met on 24 February to discuss recent OSCE PA activities, as well as upcoming meetings and election observation missions.

Treasurer Roberto Battelli presented to the Standing Committee the audited accounts of the Assembly for the past financial year. The report of the Assembly's outside independent

"As the only OSCE Institution comprised of elected officials, we are entrusted to serve the people who duly elected us."

-- OSCE PA President Petros Efthymiou

professional auditor has given a positive assessment on the PA's financial management and the audit once again did not result in any

qualifications.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported on the activities of the International Secretariat, highlighting the support it provides for presidential visits and the work of special representatives and ad hoc committees.

The Winter Meeting concluded with a joint session of the three committees, with presentations by the Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of State for European Affairs of Ireland Lucinda Creighton; OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek and OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry.

A special debate on conventional arms control in the OSCE area included participation from leading experts on arms control from the Russian Federation, the United States, and the OSCE.

First Joint Session of the General Committees



O SCE PA President Petros Efthymiou opened the 11th Winter Meeting by welcoming participants and adopting the draft agenda for the meeting. He announced the theme of the special debate, “The Future of Arms Control in the OSCE Area,” and expressed the Assembly’s gratitude to the OSCE Secretariat and the Austrian hosts for making the annual Winter Meeting possible.

**Barbara Prammer,
President of the Austrian Parliament**

The President of the Austrian Parliament, Barbara Prammer, called on OSCE parliamentarians to protect and strengthen OSCE commitments, especially in the human dimension. This is particularly important since initiatives in this area failed to reach consensus at the OSCE Ministerial Council in December, she said.

President Prammer welcomed the priority of the Irish OSCE Chairmanship with regard to gender equality. She also called on the parliamentarians of those OSCE participating States who have not yet done so to ratify the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Agreement for the Establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Academy as an international organization.

She further emphasized the role of women in political and economic decisions, as well as the important role of civil society in relation to national governments and the OSCE. Prammer

also expressed support for the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship in 2014.

**Petros Efthymiou, President of the
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

In his opening address, President Efthymiou spoke of the need for governments to respect the rule of law, particularly in prison systems, and called for better protection of freedom online. “We all have the responsibility in our home parliaments to advocate for laws that protect freedom of expression wherever that expression is taking place,” he said. “To ensure citizens remain free from government pressure online requires us to take more difficult action.”

In emphasizing the role parliamentarians should play in rebuilding trust in government and addressing challenges faced by OSCE participating States, Efthymiou said countries should consider sanctioning companies that willingly sell technology that they know is going to be used to restrict internet freedom.

President Efthymiou emphasized the importance of co-operation and mutual understanding in dealing with modern challenges. He hailed the progress of the PA over the last 11 years, achieving full co-operation between its three committees and its counterparts within the governmental structures of the Organization.

President Efthymiou applauded OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier on launching a new era of improved relations between the PA

First Joint Session of the General Committees



and the OSCE's executive structures.

All of the OSCE structures, Efthymiou said, have a common mandate to benefit the people of the OSCE area and improve the effectiveness of the Organization. He noted the ongoing need for exercising impartiality and integrity in field activities, and expressed hope for fruitful co-operation with the Irish Chairmanship on resolving protracted conflicts, using the Northern Ireland experience as a model for success for other conflicts in the OSCE region.

Efthymiou called for more transparency in the OSCE Permanent Council and a change of the consensus rule in order to allow more immediate action on pressing issues. Lastly, he called on European leaders to look upon the OSCE as a model for tackling the difficult economic challenges through mutual respect and trust.

Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General

Ambassador Zannier highlighted the need to strengthen relations between the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE's executive structures. He encouraged parliamentarians "to play a more active role in developing new, 'outside the box' ideas, and providing fresh inputs to the OSCE's intergovernmental dialogue." Zannier also underlined the "crucial role" parliamentarians play within the countries they represent, reminding governments of the commitments they have undertaken and working to



ensure their full implementation. In particular, the Secretary General welcomed the Parliamentary Assembly's engagement on issues over which there is no consensus, such as conventional arms control.

Secretary General Zannier highlighted the important role of the Assembly in promoting the Mediterranean dimension, in particular by observing the first post-revolution elections in Tunisia in October 2011. He stressed that key decisions taken by OSCE foreign ministers in Vilnius, such as those on conflict resolution, strengthening engagement with OSCE Partners for Co-operation and addressing transnational threats "recognize the need for greater coherence across the OSCE family in pursuing our common goals."

The Secretary General concluded by assuring Members of the Assembly that his "door is always open," and expressed his hopes for continued partnership and transparency. Amb. Zannier then took questions from the assembled parliamentarians.







General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



Karl-Georg Wellmann, Chair of the First Committee

First Committee Chair Karl-Georg Wellmann (Germany) introduced the agenda, which included presentations by the rapporteur, the vice-chair, the OSCE Security Committee Chair, and talks by experts from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the OSCE Directorate for Transnational Threats (TNT).



Vilija Aleknaite-Abramikiene, Rapporteur of the First Committee

Presenting her ideas for the Monaco Annual Session, Rapporteur Vilija Aleknaite-Abramikiene noted the contribution that the Geneva Discussions are making towards the situation in Georgia and reiterated that more work remains on addressing the humanitarian consequences of the 2008 war. She welcomed progress made in resuming the 5+2 talks on Transnistria and expressed hope that the PA will continue to support the work of the OSCE Secretariat and Chair-in-Office towards stemming ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan.

Aleknaite-Abramikiene noted the technical and procedural modifications made to the Vienna Document but emphasized that it still needs a full modernization.



Susanne Bratli, Vice-Chair of the First Committee

Vice-Chair Susanne Bratli (Norway) presented her interim follow-up report on developments related to PA recommendations adopted at the 20th Annual Session in Belgrade.

The vice-chair briefed participants on the activities of the Organization beyond the OSCE area, with particular attention on the Arab Spring. She highlighted the PA's election observation in Tunisia in October 2011, pointing out that election observation is an area in which the PA provides specific input into the OSCE's objectives for the promotion of democracy and human rights beyond the OSCE area.

Bratli regretted the lack of consensus on re-establishing OSCE presences in Belarus and Georgia. Emphasizing that there are few places where OSCE presences are so badly needed, she stated that it was important to continue working towards re-establishing presences in these two countries.

Ambassador Tacan Ildem, Chair of the OSCE Security Committee and Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE

Tacan Ildem described the scope of the OSCE Security Committee's work, which operates under the Permanent Council to address political and non-military aspects of security. These include transnational threats, terrorism, organized crime, cybercrime, policing, border management and illicit drug trafficking.

He noted that co-operation with other international organizations provides added value to the Security Committee, particularly on the sharing of best practices. The Security Committee's main priorities for 2012 include enhancing co-ordination with participating

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

States, the OSCE Secretariat, and the Chair-in-Office, especially on transnational threats.

He emphasized that the OSCE is itself an evolving endeavour towards the goal of the 'Security Community' identified at the 2010 Astana Summit. In this respect, he looked forward to working with the PA's First Committee in tackling transnational challenges and achieving the goals set out in Astana.

Mauro Miedico, Chief of the Specialized Terrorism Prevention Branch, United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime

The UNODC Chief of the Specialized Terrorism Prevention Branch, Mauro Miedico, discussed initiatives by his organization to proactively prevent acts of terrorism. He sought to depoliticize the issue of terrorism by taking a more technical and legal approach, calling on parliamentarians to ensure that all international protocols and conventions are ratified by their national legislatures, in order to establish a common legal framework.

Miedico emphasized that any solution to transnational threats such as terrorism must focus on inter-institutional co-operation. By taking an approach based on the rule of law, the UNODC encourages capacity building within OSCE participating States and partners around the world.

Manuel Marion, Senior Programme Officer, OSCE Transnational Threats – Action Against Terrorism Unit (TNT-ATU)

Manuel Marion focused on five "strategic directions" for the OSCE to pursue when countering transnational threats: building political support, identifying and addressing gaps and emerging threats, protecting human rights, fostering international co-operation, and facilitating assistance for capacity building.

Marion noted that the OSCE deals with counter-terrorism comprehensively, incorporating all three dimensions of security.

The TNT-ATU was committed to establishing an OSCE area free of terrorist safe havens and to protecting energy infrastructure, he said. Finally, Marion called on parliamentarians to encourage their governments to contribute to the ATU's activities.

Murat Yildiz, Police Affairs Officer and Training Adviser, OSCE Transnational Threats – Strategic Police Matters Unit

Murat Yildiz spoke about the role of policing in defeating terrorism and organized crime. He explained how terrorist groups were teaming up with organized crime through smuggling and fundraising activities. He called for a more holistic approach to crime prevention, targeting the less privileged elements of society that have become especially vulnerable to the effects of crime. This approach involves partnerships between police and the public, he said.

Yildiz noted that national police forces preferred to work on a unilateral basis, thus presenting a challenge to international co-operation. Greater interdependence between national forces would enhance law enforcement across the OSCE area, he said.

Nemanja Malisevic, Cyber Security Officer, OSCE Secretariat

Nemanja Malisevic, Cyber Security Officer at the OSCE, provided a detailed analysis of the growing trend of cybercrime. According to Malisevic, most cybercrime remains unreported, which renders difficult any attempts to establish official figures. Malisevic welcomed the initiative by the previous Chair-in-Office to hold a high-level conference on the issue, but regretted that participating States were unable to agree on a Ministerial Council decision in Vilnius. Nonetheless, he hoped that continued discussions within the Security Committee would assist in formulating a decision by the Permanent Council in 2012.

Discussion

The parliamentarians discussed various issues raised regarding the threats presented to cyber security, the need to harmonize the legal framework across participating States, the issue of compliance of counter-terrorism measures with international and human rights law, and the global nature of the terrorism threat.

Central Asia was underlined as a key region in which undefined and porous borders needed to be addressed in order to combat drug trafficking more effectively.

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment



Serhiy Shevchuk, Chair of the Second Committee

Opening the meeting, Serhiy Shevchuk (Ukraine) noted that the OSCE PA had adopted a resolution on international crime and the rule of law in Oslo in July 2010, and that at the Belgrade Annual Session in July 2011, the Assembly adopted resolutions addressing energy security, migration, cyber security and the environment.

However, parliamentary oversight had generally slacked given the rapid pace of reform in times of crisis, Shevchuk said. He therefore called on the governments of participating States to act with more transparency and on OSCE parliamentarians to help implement the resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly.

Tony Lloyd, Rapporteur of the Second Committee

Rapporteur Tony Lloyd (United Kingdom) outlined his ideas for his report for the Annual Session in Monaco. Lloyd argued that a debate must take place within every country and between politicians in the OSCE about which economic policies must be put in place to face the crisis. Emphasizing the debate between austerity and the economic policies of growth, he stressed that the cost of unemployment had become too high across the OSCE region.

The rapporteur observed that those who bear the cost of economic failure tend to be both the young and the old, more women than men, individuals coming from marginal communities, and disproportionately less-developed economies. In the short term, the crisis puts

pressure on individuals and family budgets. In the medium term, failure to establish an inclusive economic management increases social tensions, including through crime and disorder and potentially rising ethnic tensions. In the longer term, the economic crisis can impact people's health – both mentally and physically – and lead to the alienation of whole sections of society.

The rapporteur stated that, given the financial shock, the OSCE PA ought to be looking into the politics of economic management, the debate about growth, and the impact of a lack of growth. Lloyd added that the PA should look for the economic policies which target investment in education and other areas such as the green economy.

Ambassador Eustathios Lozos, Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee

Ambassador Lozos stated that the economic and environmental dimension remains an essential and indispensable part of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, especially with the serious impact the global economic and financial crisis has had on the economies of all participating States. Despite the importance of the OSCE's second dimension, Amb. Lozos observed that the OSCE's work in this area sometimes lacks clear orientation.

Lozos outlined the principles and objectives he pursues as Chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee. He stated that his first and foremost objective is to support the Irish Chairmanship in pursuing its priority on good governance, which addresses many causes of the current financial crisis. Secondly, Amba-

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment



sador Lozos will seek to ensure the proper follow-up to the Ministerial Council decisions by enhancing cross-dimensional approaches and complementarities with other relevant organizations and by engaging with OSCE Partners for Co-operation. Finally, he will initiate the process of reviewing the implementation of the 2003 Maastricht Strategy.

Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Goran Svilanovic outlined his Office's expected activities in 2012. The 20th Economic and Environmental Forum will have a special focus on the Promotion of Security and Stability through Good Governance, he said. A first preparatory meeting was held in Vienna at the beginning of February, while a second meeting will take place in Dublin in April. Building on both theses conferences and the Concluding Meeting in Prague, participants will have the opportunity to generate relevant recommendations for the OSCE in the field of good governance. To that effect, Svilanovic invited the Parliamentary Assembly to actively contribute to this process and join his Office in identifying ad hoc policies worth pursuing.

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities is focusing this year on promoting good governance and transparency, fighting corruption and combating money laundering and financing of terrorism, he said. The Office works in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and OSCE field presences, as well as partner organizations such as the World Bank and the Council of Europe.

Svilanovic stated that “participation” and “partnerships” are the driving forces in ensuring environmental security and sustainable development. He explained that his Office will continue its support to strengthen and further expand the Aarhus Centres Network in the OSCE region with special emphasis on enhancing their capacities as advocates of environmental good governance.

Finally, Svilanovic emphasized the essential role of parliamentarians, especially in helping to drive progress in the Rio+20 negotiations. He noted that in June 2012, the Rio+20 Conference will focus on two themes which are equally relevant for parliamentarians: the green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development, both of which are linked to security, peace and stability.

Discussion

The presentations were followed by an open debate on the economic and financial crisis in Europe, involving the participation of a dozen parliamentarians. Key issues touched on included water security, the Eurozone crisis and the importance of science and technology for economic recovery.

The parliamentarians put forward multifaceted solutions to the crisis, highlighting their own national experiences. Members emphasized the importance of promoting job training, establishing greater fiscal convergence within the Eurozone, reforming the banking sector and monetary policies, and promoting investment in renewable energy.

Greater investment in Greece was also called for in order to help the country's economic recovery.







General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



**Matteo Mecacci,
Chair of the Third Committee**

Chaired by Matteo Mecacci (Italy), the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions heard reports from the Committee's vice-chair and from the rapporteur, as well as presentations related to prisons and justice in the OSCE area.

In his opening statement, Mecacci noted the importance of highlighting individual cases to make real the meaning of the OSCE's human dimension. "It takes a human face to drive home the urgency of human rights," Mecacci said. "At its best the OSCE was known for this kind of work, focusing on specific cases of rights being abused."



**Alain Neri,
Vice-Chair of the Third Committee**

Vice-Chair Alain Neri (France) discussed the follow-up on recommendations from the OSCE PA's Belgrade Declaration, focusing on the situation in Belarus, the work of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and the OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit.



Neri also discussed work that had been done on international parental child abduction, discrimination of Roma and highlighted the importance of enhanced co-operation between the OSCE Human Dimension Committee and the OSCE PA's Third Committee in the field of democracy, human rights and humanitarian questions.

**Coskun Coruz,
Rapporteur of the Third Committee**

Rapporteur Coskun Coruz (The Netherlands) presented his ideas for his report to the 21st Annual Session in Monaco, focusing primarily on judicial independence and prison reform. He referred to the 2005 OSCE Ministerial Council in which participating States agreed that ensuring the rule of law is not merely a legal formality but is rather "justice based on the recognition and full acceptance of supreme value of the human personality."

Coruz stressed that judicial independence and prison conditions are connected in their need for transparency and reiterated that court proceedings in the OSCE region must be open to international observers. Coruz also expressed concern about the situation of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko as well as the lack of due process at the Guantanamo detention facility.

**Ambassador Thomas Greminger,
Chair of the OSCE Human Dimension
Committee**

Thomas Greminger gave an overview of the work accomplished in the Human Dimension Committee, with a total of 15 Committee

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

meetings taking place in 2011. Ambassador Greminger also expressed his disappointment with the “zero outcome” for the human dimension at the 2011 Ministerial Council.

Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Ambassador Lenarcic highlighted the important co-operation between the OSCE PA and the ODIHR on election observation activities, thanking all parliamentarians who had taken part in OSCE election observation. He described ODIHR’s work on recent projects, including one concerning war crimes trials in the former Yugoslavia and an upcoming project dealing with best practices on the integration of the Roma. Lenarcic also reiterated the call of OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs Alcee Hastings, who during the previous Winter Meeting had urged the OSCE to reach out to the Mediterranean region and assist with democratic transition.



**Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative
on Freedom of the Media**

Dunja Mijatovic focused on internet freedom. She pointed out that it is in her mandate to remind all participating States that they should reform laws that restrict free speech, including on the internet. She also stressed the importance of protecting journalists in the OSCE area. In this light Mijatovic mentioned the positive development of 14 participating States recently decriminalizing defamation in their penal codes.



**Manfred Nowak,
Professor of International Law and
Human Rights at Vienna University and
former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture**

Professor Manfred Nowak provided a detailed presentation on judicial systems in the OSCE area. He noted a worldwide prison crisis, with overcrowded prisons and deteriorating penal conditions, which also involves the OSCE area. He pointed out that ten out of 25 States with the highest prison populations in the world are OSCE countries. He also commented on the high rate of extra-judicial killings in some OSCE participating States.



**Lucia Uva on the case of her brother,
Giuseppe Uva**

Lucia Uva spoke about the case of her brother Giuseppe Uva, who died in police custody in the town of Varese, Italy. His body showed signs of physical and sexual abuse, none of which was mentioned in the police report. In addition, she said, a subsequent court case on the incident was flawed, as an eyewitness was prevented from submitting evidence.

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Bill Browder
on the case of Sergei Magnitsky

Bill Browder spoke about the case of his former attorney, the late Sergei Magnitsky, who died in police custody in Russia after many months of ill-treatment. Browder also mentioned his work with OSCE PA Vice-President Ben Cardin in introducing legislation in the U.S. Congress that would freeze the assets and ban the visas of those responsible for the death of Sergei Magnitsky. The bill is expected to pass this year, he said, calling on other countries to adopt similar legislation.



Iryna Bogdanova
on the case of Andrei Sannikov

Iryna Bogdanova, sister of former Belarusian presidential candidate and opposition leader Andrei Sannikov, gave a presentation on behalf of her brother, who is serving a five-year sentence for his role in protesting the conduct of the December 2010 presidential election in Belarus. Bogdanova asked the members of the OSCE PA to do whatever is in their power to help the people of Belarus.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the range of issues raised by the various testimonials. Delegates from the countries in question disputed whether the cases highlighted were in fact politically motivated. There were also objections raised to singling out certain countries, while politicians have also been indicted in other OSCE participating States.

Delegates also encouraged Members of the OSCE PA to urge their governments to come up with resolutions on Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, and argued that there must be common standards on freedom of the media.



Eugenia Tymoshenko
on the case of Yulia Tymoshenko

Eugenia Tymoshenko discussed the case of her mother, former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, currently serving a seven-year prison sentence in Ukraine. She said her mother's trial was a "show trial," and highlighted the danger to democratic systems inherent in political prosecutions.

"No democracy can exist if political leaders are to be imprisoned for their political decisions," she said. "No decision would ever be taken if that were the case."





Standing Committee Meeting



The Standing Committee consists of the OSCE PA's 56 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, the Fall Meetings and the Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget, and appoints the Secretary General. The 2012 Winter Meeting's Standing Committee met on 24 February and was addressed by the PA's President, Treasurer, and Secretary General as well as by Special Representatives and leaders of election observation missions.

The Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations met on 24 February to hear reports on recent OSCE PA activities, as well as to discuss upcoming meetings and election observation.

In President Efthymiou's address, he reported on his activities since the Fall Meetings in Dubrovnik, mentioning in particular visits to Italy, the Holy See, Israel, and the Palestinian territories. He also held a series of high-level meetings in Cyprus, and met the Chairperson-in-Office Eamon Gilmore welcoming the Irish agenda for 2012. President Efthymiou also stressed the importance of engaging closely with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) presented to the Standing Committee the audited accounts of the Assembly for the past financial year. Battelli reported that for the 19th year in a row the Assembly has stayed within the approved budget, with no increase for the third year in a row and contributions to the Assembly remaining the same.

The report of the Assembly's outside independent professional auditor has given a positive assessment on the PA's financial management and the audit once again did not result in any qualification.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver thanked the national delegations for their contributions, particularly pointing out the generous support of Austria and Denmark. He reported on the activities of the International Secretariat, highlighting the support it provides to presidential

visits and the work of special representatives and ad hoc committees. He also pointed to the PA's successful research fellowship programme and the effective work done by the Assembly's Liaison Office in Vienna.

The Standing Committee heard reports on election observation activities, including the 15 January parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan. President Emeritus Joao Soares (Portugal), who led the mission to Kazakhstan, noted the positive co-operation that the PA enjoyed with the ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Vice-President Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden) reported on the election observation mission to Kyrgyzstan on 30 October 2011, and Vice-President Riccardo Migliori (Italy) reported on the election observation mission to Tunisia on 23 October.

President Efthymiou reported on the election observation mission to the parliamentary elections in the Russian Federation on 4 December 2011.

The Standing Committee also heard reports from the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, the Parliamentary Team on Moldova, as well as Special Representative on Migration Kathleen Ferrier, Special Representative on the South Caucasus Joao Soares, and Special Representative on Human Trafficking Chris Smith.

Following a discussion of the 4 March presidential election in Russia, President Efthymiou decided to deploy a small OSCE PA delegation to observe.

Standing Committee Meeting



Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



Knut Vollebaek

The closing joint session of the three committees consisted of a report by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, an address by the Representative of OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of State for European Affairs of Ireland Lucinda Creighton, a report by OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry and a special debate on “The Future of Conventional Arms Control in the OSCE Area.”

Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

In his report, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek highlighted progress in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, despite lingering ethnic tensions, and urged parliamentarians to continue reconciliation in this region. He outlined the work being actively undertaken in Kyrgyzstan, and the increasing involvement of the High Commissioner of the OSCE as a third party to settle disputes within the OSCE area. Ambassador Vollebaek, in response to a question, also discussed the importance of official state languages and minority languages.

Lucinda Creighton, Representative of the Irish Chairmanship

Representing the Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of State for European Affairs of Ireland Lucinda Creighton noted the significant role played by the OSCE in conflict resolution, promoting peace, security and respect for human



Lucinda Creighton

rights and the rule of law. Its co-operative and inclusive nature is, she said, is its best asset and an important part of this co-operation is the work carried out by the Parliamentary Assembly. She highlighted in particular the Assembly’s role in facilitating inter-parliamentary dialogue across the OSCE region, and on behalf of the Chairperson-in-Office, Irish Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore, Creighton expressed the readiness of the Irish Chairmanship to work closely with the Parliamentary Assembly in order to further the OSCE’s common objectives.

Hedy Fry, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues

Hedy Fry expressed her satisfaction that the Ministerial Council and the Parliamentary Assembly are finding some common ground on gender issues. “A great deal can be accomplished when the message about the reality of continued gender imbalance in the OSCE area is delivered together,” she said.

Fry reported that she is participating in a project by the OSCE/ODIHR on Cross-Party Women’s Caucuses in the OSCE Region. The project is intended to gather valuable information about how parliaments in the OSCE deal with women’s issues, she said.

The Special Representative encouraged greater representation of at least 30 per cent women in the OSCE PA Bureau and called on female parliamentarians to put their names forward for election. She added that her report for the upcoming Monaco Annual Session will focus the conditions of women belonging to national minorities.

Closing Joint Session of the General Committees

**Special Debate**

Opening the special debate on arms control, President Efthymiou highlighted the importance of various arms control regimes, including the Vienna Document (VD), which he regretted has not kept up with the pace of changes in armed forces.

**Damian R. Leader, Arms Control
Regime Expert from the United States**

In his presentation, Damian Leader underlined that the arms control regime comprised of the Vienna Document, the Open Skies Treaty and the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty is crucial to a stable and predictable environment and provides secure foundation for stability. A constant adaptation of this arms control regime is necessary to reflect the changes in the 21st century, he said, emphasizing that harmonizing the CFE, the Open Skies Treaty and the VD would result in greater stability. He regretted that 2011 started on a disappointing note with the VD-plus not being implemented in the Russian Federation.

**Anton Mazur, Head of the Russian Delegation to the Vienna Negotiations on
Military Security & Arms Control**

Anton Mazur outlined some of the work his office has been engaged with and gave a historical perspective on the problem from the Russian point of view. Consultations are in deadlock because some countries are using the interests of partners to solve political problems through



arms control and opted for collective solution tools. He advocated thorough modernization and urged that new agreements should reflect the reality of the situation on the ground. He highlighted the significance of the OSCE's progress on the VD-plus since Barack Obama became president in the United States, the first move forward in almost 20 years.

**Mathew Geertsen,
Senior Forum for Security Co-operation
(FSC) Support Officer**

In his presentation, Mathew Geertsen outlined the work of the FSC in the realm of arms control, stating that the VD is a tailor-made instrument for confidence and security building. He outlined the changing nature of threats to security, noting that parliamentarians would benefit from an adapted or new set of CSBMs to strengthen transparency and predictability. The VD, he said, should be a "living document."

Discussion

In the debate that followed, MPs expressed a range of views on the subject and made suggestions concerning the future of conventional arms control. Several delegates urged progress on the modernization of the VD and the implementation of the corresponding Vilnius MC decision 2011.

The Winter Meeting concluded with President Efthymiou issuing a statement on the violence in Syria. With the consent of the Joint Session, he called for a full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Syria.









**PROGRAMME OF THE ELEVENTH WINTER MEETING
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

Vienna, 23 – 24 February 2012

Thursday, 23 February 2012

09.00 – 11.45 **General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions**
(Ratsaal, 5th floor)

12.00 – 13.15 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** *(Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)*

- Opening by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Petros Efthymiou
- Address by the President of the Austrian Parliament, Ms. Barbara Prammer
- Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Petros Efthymiou
- Address by the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, followed by a question & answer session

13.15 – 15.15 Lunch Break

15.15 – 18.00 **General Committee on Political Affairs and Security** *(Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)*

15.15 – 18.00 **General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment**
(Ratsaal, 5th floor)

18.15 Departure of buses from *Hofburg* to the Austrian Parliament

18.30 **Reception offered by the Austrian Parliament** *(Austrian Nationalrat)*

Friday, 24 February 2012

09.00 – 12.00 **Standing Committee Meeting** *(Ratsaal, 5th floor)*

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch break

13.30 – 16.30 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** *(Neuer Saal, 2nd floor)*

Report by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, followed by a debate

Address by the Representative of OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of State For European Affairs of Ireland, Ms. Lucinda Creighton, followed by a question & answer session

Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues, Ms. Hedy Fry, followed by a debate

Special Debate on *The Future of Conventional Arms Control in the OSCE Area*

Closure by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Petros Efthymiou



Philippe Nobile

Secretary General
Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly, and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and has a permanent staff of 18, including three staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.

Deputy Secretary
General
Tina SchönDeputy Secretary
General
Gustavo PallaresSpecial
Representative
Andreas NothelleAssistant to the
Secretary General
Dana BjerregaardDeputy Director
of Administration
Marc CarilletProgramme
Officer Maria
ChepurinaProgramme Director
Anna ChernovaSenior Counsellor
Semyon DzakhayevConference
Co-ordinator
Odile LeLargéAdministrative
Director
Kurt LerrasAdministrative
Assistant
Lindsay McGillDeputy Director for Field
Operations Roberto MontellaEditorial Director
Nat ParryIT-Supporter
Stephen PaulStaff Assistant
Pia Cathrin
RasmussenOperations Officer
Iryna SabashukDirector of
Communications
Neil Simon



Bringing together 320 parliamentarians from across the 56-nation OSCE region, including Europe, Asia and North America, the OSCE PA provides a forum for parliamentary dialogue, leads election observation missions, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, originally established by the 1990 Paris Summit to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, is the oldest continuing OSCE Institution.

The basic objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States;
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly employs a variety of means:

- A Final Declaration and a number of resolutions and recommendations are adopted each year at the Annual Session in July;
- Committee work addresses important contemporary international issues;
- Programmes and Seminars designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions to areas of latent or active crisis.



OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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