

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

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Efthymiou, Soares, Oliver meet Chair-in-Office Gilmore in Dublin

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Petros Efthymiou expressed support today for the Irish Chairmanship agenda, including internet freedom and conflict resolution, during a meeting with Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Eamon Gilmore.

The Assembly's Special Representative on South Caucasus Joao Soares and Secretary General Spencer Oliver joined President Efthymiou in the meeting with Gilmore to discuss common goals to further the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Frank Cogan, chair of the OSCE Task Force, also participated in the meeting.

"The historic peacemaking work conducted in Northern Ireland should serve as inspiration for the OSCE's conflict resolution efforts and remind us that there is always hope to thaw the frozen conflicts in the OSCE region," Efthymiou said.

The Irish Chairmanship has announced its plans to hold in April a conference in Dublin about conflict resolution, bringing international



President Petros Efthymiou shake hands with OSCE Chair-in-Office and Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore.

experts together to discuss the Northern Ireland peace process as a case study.

The delegation had a substantive meeting with Irish Political Director David Donoghue regarding the country's priorities as chair of the Organization.

Members of the Parliamentary Assembly have passed several resolutions in the last two years aimed at promoting dialogue to resolve conflicts, increasing the free flow of information online, and combating hate crimes, all chairmanship priorities.

While in Dublin, the Parliamentary Assembly delegation

raised issues related to election observation and improving transparency, accountability and efficiency at the OSCE in Vienna.

Members of the delegation had a working lunch with the six-member Irish Delegation to the OSCE PA, chaired by Eoghan Murphy T.D.

They also met with Sean Barrett T.D., and members of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, chaired by Pat Breen, T.D.

Kyrgyzstan MPs travel to Sweden for parliamentary exchange

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden) is co-hosting a delegation of parliamentarians this week from the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic on a study visit to Sweden.

The visiting delegation, including Vice Speaker Torobai Zulpukarov, represents all five political parties from the Kyrgyzstani Parliament. Delegates will meet with Swedish parliamentarians, including colleagues from the committees on constitutional issues and foreign affairs, and Foreign Ministry officials.

The four-day study visit is supported by the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation and the Olof Palme International Center. The study visit follows an April 2011 needs assessment, supported by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, where representatives of the foundation, led

by Habsburg Douglas, met with a wide range of political parties and representatives of civil society to explore possible inter-parliamentary co-operation and ways to support the parliament as a democratic institution in the Central Asian republic.

"In the context of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is a logical country to start co-operation and twinning among political parties in Europe," Habsburg Douglas said. "We welcome this study visit, and the good co-operation between Kyrgyzstan and Sweden. Through work in my own parliament, as well as within the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, I hope to maintain focus on the situation in Kyrgyzstan and support the country's democratic institutions. We must offer Kyrgyzstan all the support it needs to be a successful parliamentary republic in the region."



Members of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA with visiting Kyrgyzstani parliamentarians in Stockholm.

Winter Meeting to debate arms control

Parliamentarians attending this month's Winter Meeting in Vienna will participate in a special security debate.

On top of regular committee meetings and interaction with the OSCE governmental side, the agenda for the Assembly's second-largest gathering of the year includes a debate entitled "The Future of Conventional Arms Control in the OSCE Area".

In a sign of increasing co-operation between the OSCE's governmental and parliamentary dimensions, the Assembly's three general committees will meet with the chairs of their counterpart committees from the Permanent Council.

This year's meeting takes place 23-24 February at the Hofburg.