

# News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

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## PA announces Helsinki +40 Colloquium Project



### HELSINKI +40

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After several months of careful planning, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is officially launching its Helsinki +40 Colloquium Project. In advance of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2015, the PA will be holding a series of seminars taking stock of where the OSCE currently stands, capitalizing on its past and exploring new ways to move forward. Particular focus will be on the role of parliamentary diplomacy and the OSCE's oldest institution, the Parliamentary Assembly, in evaluating and reviving the OSCE.

OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic asked the OSCE PA International Secretariat to partner with several prominent think tanks to evaluate the OSCE's past and present, and the future development of the Organization.

Through the engagement of distinguished experts, politicians, and diplomats who have been involved in CSCE/OSCE activities, the project will initiate discussions on the OSCE's Helsinki +40 process, providing important food-for-thought materials and recommendations for the OSCE participating States and the Organization as a whole. The OSCE PA will partner with the German Marshall Fund in the United States, the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) in Russia, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in Sweden.

The project is led by former PA President Joao Soares (Portugal); Head of the Committee on Transparency and Reform of the OSCE François-Xavier de Donnea (Belgium); and PA Special Co-ordinator for the Helsinki +40 Process Ilkka Kanerva (Finland). PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, who has been involved in the CSCE/OSCE for more than 30 years, will be responsible for the project's overall co-ordination, assisted by Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

"The Helsinki +40 Project provides a crucial opportunity for us to reinvigorate our mission as an organization. Drawing on a rich cross-section of the OSCE's many interlocutors, this initiative will help us reflect on what we've accomplished and identify where we must reform in order to stay relevant and effective. As the OSCE's democratic backbone, the Parliamentary Assembly is particularly suited to take on this

ambitious initiative. I see no more fitting way to mark the 40th anniversary of the Final Act," Oliver said.

The leaders of the PA delegations in the United States, Russia and Sweden and several present members of the PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Reform will be invited to participate in their respective seminars/colloquiums. The three seminars are expected to be held in Washington in early summer, followed by a second event in Moscow in September, and a third gathering in Stockholm in early spring of 2015. A final colloquium is expected to be held in Helsinki on the eve of the PA's 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki.

The Parliamentary Assembly has been actively preparing for the project since September 2013. The President of RIAC and former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said, "I strongly believe that the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly hold great potential for strengthening security and enhancing co-operation in the Euro-Atlantic region. RIAC is most honoured to participate in the drafting of recommendations and proposals to foster increased trust and co-operation within the OSCE in the years to come."

The German Marshall Fund's Vice-President for Programmes Ivan Vejvoda said, "The German Marshall Fund of the United States is pleased to join SIPRI, RIAC and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on this keynote Helsinki +40 Project. The OSCE continues to play a vital role in upholding the values and rights enshrined in the Final Act of 1975 and contributes to the stability of the global international order. New challenges for the organization are also new opportunities."

Goran Lenmarker, former PA President and current Chairman of SIPRI, said that "The OSCE concept has now proven itself, and its contribution to European security has been validated by experience. The 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act provides a great opportunity to take a forward- and outward-looking perspective on the future development of the OSCE and the vital role of its parliamentary branch. It is a privilege for SIPRI to take part in this important project."

Discussions focused on defining the concept and modalities of co-operation between the PA and the three think tanks.