

PA meets with OSCE officials in Vienna ahead of Ukraine visit



OSCE Permanent Council Chairman Amb. Thomas Greminger and his team meet with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Programme Director Anna Chernova.

Staff members from the International Secretariat held a day of meetings in Vienna Wednesday to liaise with OSCE interlocutors on the Organization's activities in Ukraine and the Assembly's plans in the lead-up to the 25 May election.

PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver was joined by Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, Programme Director Anna Chernova, Communications Director Richard Solash, Director of Presidential Administration Roberto Montella and Deputy Director of Administration Marc Carillet for meetings with representatives from the OSCE Center for Conflict Prevention and the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as Amb. Ihor Prokopchuk, the Permanent Representative of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE, Amb. Thomas Greminger, the Permanent Representative of the Swiss Delegation to the OSCE and Daniel Baer, the Permanent Representative of the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE.

Claus Neukirch, the CPC's Deputy Director for Operations Service, briefed the PA staff on the mandate and make-up

of the monitoring mission that it is forming for Ukraine. The sides also discussed co-operation between the monitors and OSCE parliamentarians who are planning to visit the country in the coming months. Andrey Rikhter, the Director of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, discussed Ukraine's rapidly changing media environment, the continuing attacks against journalists and the role that the media may play in the upcoming presidential election.

Amb. Prokopchuk and the PA staff discussed plans for the 25 May vote in Ukraine as well as the situation in Crimea, minority issues in Ukraine and the OSCE's response to the current crisis. The PA staff also discussed plans to monitor Ukraine's presidential election and other institutional issues with Amb. Baer.

Finally, the PA delegation met with Amb. Greminger and his staff to discuss co-operation between the Swiss Chairmanship, the OSCE PA and other OSCE institutions on current and future efforts in Ukraine, as well as the challenge the crisis has presented to the organization. Oliver, Chernova and Solash will continue on to Ukraine for a two-day pre-election visit that will feature meetings with governmental and OSCE officials.

In Kyiv, they will be joined by former PA President Joao Soares, who was appointed last week as the Special Co-ordinator for the OSCE short-term observer mission, and Political Affairs and Security Committee Chairman Makis Voridis, as well as OSCE PA Vice-President Ilkka Kanerva.

Norwegian OSCE PA Delegation visits International Secretariat



Geir Jorgen Bekkevold and Ase Michaelsen

Norway's Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly visited the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Copenhagen on 20 March for briefings on Assembly activities, election observation, and the role

of parliamentary diplomacy within the OSCE. Secretary General Spencer Oliver briefed the Delegation on upcoming activities, including the Annual Session in Baku, as well as

other ongoing activities including the PA's preparations to monitor the presidential election in Ukraine. Members of the Delegation were given a tour of the International Secretariat premises in Copenhagen, and had an opportunity to discuss a range of issues on the OSCE agenda with Secretariat staff.

Participating in the visit were the Head and Deputy Head of the Norwegian Delegation, Geir Jorgen Bekkevold and Ase Michaelsen respectively, and Kari Henriksen, Tone Sonsterud, Torill Eidsheim, Tor Andre Johnsen, and Kjell-Idar Juvik. Bjornar Hotvedt and Lisbeth Merete Stock from the Norwegian Parliament accompanied the Delegation.

OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project web page launched

The OSCE PA this week launched a web page devoted to the Helsinki +40 Project, which includes a detailed overview of the project's goals, links to the partnering think tanks' Helsinki +40 pages, a historical documents library, and videos of project leaders describing their views on the project and its overall importance for the OSCE.

As explained on the website, the Helsinki +40 Project seeks to promote reform and reaffirm the Organization's institutional and conceptual framework in the spirit of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. More information, including a calendar of events related to the Helsinki +40 Project, is available at:

<http://www.oscepa.org/parliamentary-diplomacy/helsinki40>