

Bureau meets in Copenhagen for discussions on Assembly work

The OSCE PA's leadership met in Copenhagen on 7 April for the annual spring Bureau Meeting, featuring a special debate on the situation in Ukraine.

President Ranko Krivokapic and the PA's Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Officers of the three General Committees were joined by Head of the Danish Delegation Peter Juel Jensen, a number OSCE PA Special Representatives and Chairs of Working Groups, as well as OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and the staff of the International Secretariat of the OSCE PA in the Danish Parliament (Folketinget).

The agenda included reports by Oliver and OSCE PA Treasurer Roberto Battelli, who reported on his recent meeting with the OSCE PA's outside, independent professional auditor. Bureau members also heard remarks by Ambassador Heidi Grau, Head of the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE, who described the OSCE's range efforts in Ukraine and the other priorities of the Chairmanship. Amb. Grau also took questions from the parliamentarians, elaborating on key priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship and the role of the Parliamentary Assembly. She welcomed the PA's Helsinki +40 Project as complementary to the work of the Chairmanship in moving the OSCE's Helsinki +40 process forward.

A special debate on the situation in Ukraine followed, during which parliamentarians focused on the role of dialogue, the importance of adherence to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and the risk of new escalation. The PA's plans to monitor the 25 May election in Ukraine and visit the country ahead of the vote were also discussed.

The meeting also included presentations of draft reports and resolutions from the PA's three General Committees for the 23rd Annual Session, to be held in Baku from 28 June to 2 July. Rapporteur Pia Kauma (Finland) presented



the preliminary draft report and resolution for the First Committee, discussing the role of the Helsinki Final Act and Vienna Document as cornerstones for security in Europe. Focusing on adapting arrangements for conventional arms control, her draft resolution also deals with issues such as assessing whether rules of warfare are up-to-date when taking into account new weapons systems.

Second Committee Rapporteur Roger Williams (United Kingdom) offered his ideas, focusing on the challenges of financial crises, energy issues, pollution, food and water security, and climate change. The draft resolution focuses on the importance of investing science and technology in improving environmental and economic conditions. Rapporteur Gordana Comic (Serbia) presented the Third Committee draft report and resolution focused on the humanitarian aspects of migration. The draft stresses the importance of migration management to ensure that the contribution and burden of migrants on the European continent is shared equally.

The Bureau also heard reports on recent PA election observation missions and the activities of Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives. Finally, the Bureau was informed about planning for the upcoming Annual Session of the Assembly in Baku and the 2014 Autumn Meeting, to be held in Geneva on 3-5 October.

OSCE observers: Hungarian elections competitive despite ruling party's undue advantage



The 6 April 2014 parliamentary elections in Hungary were well administered and offered voters a diverse choice, but a number of factors provided undue advantage to the ruling party, international observers said in a statement issued Monday.

"Hungarian voters were offered a genuine choice yesterday in competitive elections. Overall, the process was transparently and efficiently administered," said Adão Silva, the Special Co-ordinator who led the short-term OSCE observer mission. "Nonetheless, the ruling party still enjoyed an undue advantage, including in biased media coverage."

The candidate registration process was inclusive, observers found, with 18 party and joint party lists registered. The vastly different voting procedures for two types of categories of voters abroad undermined the principle of equal suffrage and were perceived as an attempt to differentiate voting rights on partisan grounds, according to the statement.

"Voting took place in a calm and positive atmosphere," said Baroness Jenny Hilton, the head of the OSCE PA delegation. "Unfortunately, minorities, including the large Roma population, were largely invisible during yesterday's election."

The Assembly worked closely with the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission, led by Ambassador Audrey Glover. The PA delegation consisted of nearly 50 parliamentarians and staff including the PA's Director of Elections Andreas Baker, Deputy Director of Administration Marc Carillet, and Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk.