

## Krivokapic visits Baku ahead of OSCE PA Annual Session

On an official visit this week to Azerbaijan, OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic has held a series of high-level meetings including with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. Presidents Krivokapic and Aliyev discussed issues related to the Assembly's upcoming Annual Session to be held in Baku, as well as current regional and economic developments. Other topics of discussion included the crisis in Ukraine, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, and bilateral relations between Montenegro and Azerbaijan.

Krivokapic also met with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and with Speaker of Parliament Ogtay Asadov, with whom he signed the official agreement between the OSCE PA and the Parliament of Azerbaijan for the hosting of the 23rd Annual Session to be held from 28 June to 2 July at the Fairmont Baku Congress Centre. In Baku Krivokapic also met with Azerbaijan's delegation to the Assembly led by Bahar Muradova.

In addition, President Krivokapic visited the Office

of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Baku and met with Head of the Office Ambassador Alexis Chahtahtinsky who briefed the President about the work and various projects carried out by the OSCE in the country. He met also with the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Artur Rasizade.

President Krivokapic is expected to meet Thursday with the Minister of Economy and Industry Shahin Mustafayev and representatives of civil society.

The visit to Baku, taking place from 15 to 17 April, is on the invitation of Speaker Asadov. President Krivokapic is accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and three advisers from the Parliament of Montenegro.



President Ranko Krivokapic and Speaker Ogtay Asadov

## Secretariat opens office to prepare election observation in Ukraine

To prepare for the deployment of the OSCE PA election observation mission to the 25 May Presidential election in Ukraine, the International Secretariat has opened an office in Kyiv. Working in close co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission, and co-located on their premises, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk will remain in Ukraine to ensure the smooth conduct of the deployment of observers.

Joao Soares (MP, Portugal), who will serve as Special

Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observer mission for the vote in May, led a visit to Kyiv in late March together with Makis Voridis (MP, Greece), who will head the OSCE PA election observation delegation, OSCE PA Vice-President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver. Several additional visits to different regions of Ukraine are planned in the coming weeks, which are being supported by the Secretariat and Ms. Sabashuk.

## Joint preparatory meeting for Helsinki +40 Project held in Washington



Left to right: RIAC President Igor Ivanov, GMF Senior Vice President Ivan Vejvoda, and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver

On 10 April, the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Russian International Affairs Council held a joint preparatory Helsinki +40 Project meeting at GMF Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Participants from the GMF included Ivan Vejvoda, Senior Vice President; Maia Comeau, Director of the Lugar Diplomacy Institute; Mark Fischer, Managing Director for European Offices; and Andrew Fishbein, Senior Congressional Affairs Officer. Participants from RIAC included Igor Ivanov, President; and Andrey Kortunov, Director General.

The OSCE PA International Secretariat, represented by Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Programme Officer Maria Chepurina, also took part in the meeting. Participants

exchanged views about the importance of the project in the current international context, particularly in light of the crisis in Ukraine. The discussions also focused on the preparations for the first seminar scheduled to take place on 17 June at the German Marshall Fund.

Participants will include the Chair and the Co-chairs of the Helsinki +40 Project; senior officials from the GMF; President of the OSCE PA; Secretary General of the OSCE PA; representatives of the OSCE PA Transparency and Accountability Committee; representatives of the U.S. Congress; a representative from the Swiss delegation; several invited experts; and representatives of the other two participating think tanks.

The seminar will be co-chaired by the GMF's Senior Vice President Ivan Vejvoda and the Helsinki +40 Project Chair Joao Soares. The President of the OSCE PA will make opening remarks. All working papers prepared by experts will be in English and all meetings will be conducted entirely in English. The GMF and RIAC organizers indicated that the overall number of seminar participants should not exceed 30.