

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA's 16th Winter Meeting taking place next month, busy 2017 ahead



OSCE flags flying outside the Hofburg Congress Centre, site of next month's OSCE PA Winter Meeting

Assembly President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria), Secretary General Roberto Montella, Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle and several other PA staff members are in Vienna this week to participate in the official opening of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship, where they will also discuss upcoming plans. There are several statutory meetings scheduled this year that will be discussed, as well as a number of presidential visits and expected election observation missions.

On 23-24 February, the OSCE PA will hold its 16th Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna. Following a meeting of the Assembly's Standing Committee on the morning of 23 February, the Winter Meeting will open with a joint session of the three general committees, followed by individual meetings of each committee. In a joint session on the afternoon of 24 February, a special debate will be held under the theme "Protecting human rights in times of crisis", with Members addressing the importance of upholding fundamental rights during periods of heightened security concerns.

The annual Copenhagen OSCE PA Bureau meeting will

take place 23-24 April at the Danish Parliament (Folketing). The Bureau will meet again in conjunction with the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna in December 2017.

The Assembly's 26th Annual Session will be held under the theme "Enhancing mutual trust and co-operation for peace and prosperity in the OSCE region". Hundreds of parliamentarians are expected to gather for the meeting, which will be held 5-9 July in Minsk. The 2017 Autumn Meeting will take place 3-5 October in Andorra la Vella.

A number of election observation missions are also anticipated this year, with upcoming votes taking place in Armenia, Albania and Kyrgyzstan, among others.

Winter Meeting deadline reminder

Delegations are kindly asked to register for the Winter Meeting by **24 January 2017**.

Registration forms and other practical information can be found at www.oscepa.org. Completed forms should be sent to Head of Conference Services Odile Lelarge at odile@oscepa.dk.

Sanchez Amor explores avenues for co-operation with European Parliament



Ignacio Sanchez Amor meets with Elena Valenciano, 21 Dec.

OSCE PA Third Committee Chair Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain) met on 21 December in Madrid with Elena Valenciano, Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, for discussions intended to promote open channels of co-ordination on issues of mutual interest. The two officials also considered possibilities for ensuring greater visibility of the OSCE PA in the work of the European

Parliament, with Sanchez Amor noting that human rights and rule of law matters can help establish productive and mutually beneficial relationships between international organizations.

Sanchez Amor said that while human rights are addressed individually by international organizations, when interests overlap, it is important that agendas are co-ordinated to improve effectiveness. He stressed that at the international level, the European Parliament and the OSCE PA can reinforce each other in defence of common values.

The meeting with Valenciano was the second in a round of contacts with international counterparts that Sanchez Amor intends to continue. He met in November with Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans to discuss ways to improve implementation of human rights and rule of law commitments within both the OSCE and the EU.