

PA participates in OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Cairo



Riccardo Migliori, Isabel Pozuelo and Matteo Mecacci

A high level delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, appointed by President Joao Soares, participated in the 2009 OSCE Mediterranean Conference held in Cairo on 14 and 15 December.

Vice-President Isabel Pozuelo, who also heads the Spanish delegation to the PA, led the Assembly's delegation to the Cairo Conference. Other members were Riccardo Migliori, Rapporteur of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security and Head of the Italian delegation to the PA, and Matteo Mecacci, Rapporteur of the Assembly's General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.

The Cairo Mediterranean Conference, an annual event of the OSCE, focused on "The Mediterranean Partners and the OSCE: Co-operation toward enhanced security and stability." It included sessions and discussions on politico-military aspects of security in the OSCE area and the Mediterranean, implications on migration of the current economic and financial crisis, and the prospects for further OSCE-Mediterranean co-operation.

PA representatives intervened in the debates and referred to the Assembly's important contribution to the Mediterranean dialogue in the OSCE, including the activities of the Special Representative for the Mediterranean Alcee Hastings and the Assembly's Annual Mediterranean Forum, held in Athens in October.

Vice-President Pozuelo referred in her intervention to the need for engagement with the Palestinian National Authority in the OSCE's Mediterranean dimension and for increasing dialogue and co-operation among international organizations dealing with Mediterranean issues.

Riccardo Migliori spoke about the need for further enhancing the dialogue with the Mediterranean partners and informed participants about the prospects for the Assembly's 2010 Mediterranean Forum to be held in Palermo next October as part of the Assembly's Fall Meetings.

The Parliamentary Assembly's delegation to Cairo included Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and the Secretaries of the Italian and the Spanish delegations to the PA, Pia Califano and Sylvia Marti.

Deadline near for Election Observation Mission to Ukraine

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is preparing a large Election Observation Mission to Ukraine for its presidential election scheduled for 17 January 2010. The deadline for registering is 17 December. The mission, headed by PA President Joao Soares, consists of more than 100 observers from at least 26 participating States.

Regional teams will be deployed throughout the country and will be headed by six experienced election observers. Teams will be led by Alcee Hastings (USA) in Kyiv, Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria) in Lviv, Tone Tingsgaard (Sweden) in Donetsk, Riccardo Migliori (Italy) in Sevastopol, Kanan Kalsin (Turkey) in Kharkiv and François-Xavier De Donnea (Belgium) in Odessa.

The PA's preparation for the election began in October, with substantive research being conducted by the Secretariat in Copenhagen. The PA's research team has been preparing a comprehensive briefing report and an ongoing media review, which will be distributed to observers prior to deployment.

President Soares conducted a pre-election visit to Ukraine in early November, during which he met with the Central Election Commission Chairman Volodimir Shapoval and with presidential candidates including the incumbent President Viktor Yushchenko; Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko; Chairman of the Parliament Volodymyr Lytvyn; and Viktor Yanukovich; Inna Bogoslovska; Anatolij Hrytsenko; and Arseniy Yatseniuk.

Unfortunately, bureaucratic barriers in the field have presented some obstacles in the logistical organization of the mission, with Secretariat staff encountering difficulty in establishing direct contact with the ODIHR's long term observers. Discussions continue on possible solutions to this issue.

Since 1993, the OSCE PA has deployed more than 3,000 parliamentarians to observe elections across the OSCE area. The PA observed Ukraine's presidential election in 2004 and its parliamentary elections in 2007.