

Efthymiou leads OSCE election observers to Russian elections

OSCE PA President Petros Efthymiou, appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis, to lead the short-term observers for the Russian elections on 4 December, arrived in Moscow with the team of experts on Monday as final preparations for the 2011 Election Observation Mission were being made.

Nearly 100 OSCE parliamentarians, joined by approximately 50 parliamentarians from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Nordic Council, will be deployed later this week to several areas of Russia, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhnij Novgorod, Rostov on Don, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Yaroslavl, and Yekaterinburg.

Several members of the OSCE PA Bureau will share the leadership of the OSCE PA observer team, including Vice-President Riccardo Migliori (Italy); Matteo Mecacci (Italy) and Coskun Coruz (Netherlands), Chair and Rapporteur, respectively, of the PA's human rights committee; and Tony Lloyd (United Kingdom), Rapporteur of the PA's economic and environmental committee, as well as Michel Voisin (France), Special Representative on Afghanistan, and Kathleen Ferrier (Netherlands), Special Representative on Migration.

Efthymiou held several meetings in Moscow prior to the arrival of the main delegation, and was briefed by Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, leader of the OSCE long-term observers, and her core team. He also met with Grigory Melkonians, Regional Network Manager of GOLOS, the leading domestic election observer organization, as well as with representatives of the diplomatic corps and journalists. In addition, President Efthymiou spoke at a meeting of the OSCE long-term observers and met with the Chairman of the Moscow Central Election Commission on 30 November. He will also speak at the meeting of short-term observers before opening the briefings for the OSCE PA observers on 1 December.



The OSCE PA briefings will include representatives of the main political parties competing in the elections; representatives of the media, NGOs and civil society; and representatives of civil society groups denied registration as political parties. The main briefing by the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission will include an overview of the campaign period, including comments from long-term observers, activities of political parties and candidates as well as reports on the legal framework in election administration. It will also include reports on the media monitoring undertaken in recent weeks.

The Ambassador of Greece to Russia will host a reception for the OSCE PA observers on 2 December. At a press conference on the afternoon of Monday, 5 December, President Efthymiou will deliver the agreed preliminary post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE along with other appropriate officials.

Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen is in charge of the overall organization of the OSCE PA mission and is joined by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Senior Director Semyon Dzakhayev, Programme Director Anna Chernova, Deputy Field Director Roberto Montella, Logistics Officer Iryna Sabashuk, and Communications Director Neil Simon. Also assisting are Research Fellows Maria Chepurina and Akbota Yermekova.

PA participates in Belgrade conference

On 24-25 November 2011, Karl Oellinger, MP from Austria and member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, attended a Conference in Belgrade, Serbia, focusing on Standards of Ethics/Conduct for Parliamentarians. The Conference was organized by the Serbian National Assembly, the OSCE/ODIHR, USAID and hosted by the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

Gordana Comic, member of the Serbian delegation to the OSCE PA and Deputy Speaker of the Serbian Parliament, discussed the current debate in Serbia regarding the drafting of a code of conduct for the Serbian legislature. Mr. Oellinger discussed his experience in the Austrian Parliament touching upon legislation on conflicts of interest and the sanctions regime that should be applied. In Belgrade, Oellinger was supported by Roberto Montella, Deputy Director for Field Operations of the Vienna Liaison Office.

PA to observe early parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan

The OSCE PA will observe the early parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan scheduled for 15 January 2012. President Petros Efthymiou has appointed President Emeritus João Soares to lead this OSCE PA Election Observation Mission. Those interested in obtaining more information about this mission are asked to contact Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhayev, Programme Director Anna Chernova (anna@oscepa.dk) or Logistics Officer Iryna Sabashuk (iryna@oscepa.dk) at the International Secretariat. The registration deadline is **Thursday, 5 January 2012**.

All OSCE PA observers are expected to arrive in Astana in time to attend the briefings on 13-14 January, and stay for the observer debriefing on the morning of 16 January.