News from Copenhagen

President and human rights committee Chair address forum in Samarkand

Margareta Kiener Nellen and George Tsereteli at Asian Forum on Human Rights, Samarkand, 22 November 2018

Addressing the Asian Forum on Human Rights in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 22 November, OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and human rights committee Chair Margareta Kiener Nellen (Switzerland) stressed the central role that parliaments play in upholding human rights commitments domestically and internationally.

Organized by the Government of Uzbekistan together with international partners, the two-day event brought together some 400 participants to reaffirm commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 70 years ago, as well as the OSCE's human dimension commitments.

Noting that no country can boast a perfect human rights record, in his remarks to the opening session of the forum President Tsereteli highlighted that the international community no longer simply reacts to and condemns human rights violations. "We now agree globally not only that development should improve the situation of human rights, we furthermore say that human rights standards should guide all our efforts," he said.

The President highlighted the key role that parliamentarians can play in upholding human rights.

Addressing a working session focused on the role of state bodies, Kiener Nellen, Chair of the OSCE PA's General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, highlighted the importance of effective human rights education, as a key tool to embed respect for human rights in society. While laws can help ensure that human rights are guaranteed, education can make human rights a part of our citizenry's social thinking, she said.

The OSCE PA delegation's participation in the forum in Samarkand followed a series of high-level meetings in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan earlier in the week.

Nothelle emphasizes importance of implementing Code of Conduct at Berlin symposium

Participants of the Symposium on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, Berlin (OSCE)

On 22 November, the OSCE PA's Special Representative in Vienna, Amb. Andreas Nothelle, addressed a symposium on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security in Berlin. Stressing the importance that parliamentarians – and in particular members of the OSCE PA – attach to the Code of Conduct, Amb. Nothelle noted that the frequent failure of participating States to implement their commitments under the Code of Conduct can add to the general erosion of confidence between participating States.

"It is easy to understand that an agreement on what is good conduct, and subsequent mutual adherence to the principles can be a powerful confidence-building mechanism," he said.

The symposium, held at the German Federal Foreign Office on 22-23 November, focused on how to enhance the implementation of the Code of Conduct, an OSCE document adopted in 1994 to promote democratic governance of the security sector and clarifying the role of armed and security forces in democratic societies.

The event was supported by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and included the participation of 35 officials and representatives from across the OSCE region.

PA observes second round in Georgia

L-R: Fredrik Svensson, Iryna Sabashuk, Margareta Cederfelt, Mamuka Bakhtadze, Roberto Montella

The OSCE PA has deployed a small election observation mission to the second round of the presidential election in Georgia, taking place Wednesday. Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) is serving as Special Co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observer mission and the five-member OSCE PA delegation is led by Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden).

Kiener Nellen speaks at security sector workshop

Head of the Swiss Delegation and Chair of the OSCE PA's Third Committee Margaret Kiener Nellen spoke at a workshop on security sector governance organized by the OSCE and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in partnership with the Government of Belarus and the Government of Slovakia on 14-15 November. Stressing the importance of a well-governed and accountable security sector and highlighting relevant OSCE PA resolutions, Kiener Nellen noted that a holistic and well co-ordinated approach to security sector governance and reform is fundamental in dealing with today's security challenges.