

Efthymiou addresses Permanent Council in Vienna

On 3 November OSCE PA President Petros Efthymiou delivered the annual address from the President to the Permanent Council in Vienna. Speaking to the 56 ambassadors from OSCE participating States and representatives from the Partners for Co-operation, the President called on participating States to follow up on the recommendations adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in its Annual Sessions.

“Governments conclude accords for peaceful solutions to conflicts, but it is parliamentarians who build the public support for these solutions, foster understanding about diplomatic processes, and raise public awareness about OSCE work toward lasting peace,” said the PA President.

Outlining the PA’s numerous election observation activities, including the innovative mission to Tunisia, the President also expressed his hope for a better co-operation with the ODIHR, which – as he said – is possible if in the future the 1997 Co-operation Agreement is fully respected.

Referring to the PA’s recurring calls for greater transparency and accountability of the OSCE, Efthymiou underscored that 20 years after the adoption of the Charter of Paris and the creation of the PA as the OSCE’s oldest Institution, “our citizens are increasingly wary of funding international organizations that function without the same democratic accountability they have come to expect from their own national governments. That is why we have proposed a series of solutions to make the OSCE more effective and increase its democratic legitimacy.”

Among those steps that the PA has continuously recommended in order to increase the Organization’s effectiveness are certain changes in the consensus rule and greater openness of OSCE meetings.

The President concluded his address by stating: “I remain convinced that the OSCE is important, not just because

of the glory of the past, but because having an organization, which links Europe with Asia and North America using the working methods of the OSCE, is a necessity for the present and the future. Let us all contribute to this and help that it gets the necessary upgrade in our capitals.”

As demonstrated by the replies by the delegations (Poland on behalf of the European Union, the United States, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Croatia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia and the Lithuanian Chairmanship), the address was met with high interest. Many ambassadors referred to the successful meetings in Belgrade and in Dubrovnik, underlining individual PA recommendations and commending the key role the Parliamentary Assembly plays in the Organization.

During a working dinner hosted by the Lithuanian Chairmanship, the President answered questions pertaining to all areas of OSCE work from the heads of delegations representing the Troika (Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Ireland), the three Permanent Council committees (Germany, Ukraine, Switzerland), Croatia, the EU, Greece, Portugal, Russia, and the USA. He also made use of this opportunity to repeat his expectation that the upcoming Ministerial Council in Vilnius will take due note of PA recommendations in its decisions.

During his two-day visit to the OSCE in Vienna, President Efthymiou was accompanied by Hara Papazoudi from the Hellenic Parliament and supported by Ambassador Andreas Nothelle and his colleagues from the Vienna Liaison Office.



Renatas Norkus, Chair of the Permanent Council, and PA President Petros Efthymiou

Parliamentary forum held in Kyrgyzstan

On the initiative of the PA’s Kyrgyz Delegation, the Special Co-ordinator for the Kyrgyz presidential election, OSCE PA Vice-President Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden), participated in a parliamentary forum in Bishkek on 31 October. The forum was chaired by Kyrgyz MP Roza Aknazarova, who also heads the NGO “Parliament of Political Parties.”

Participants included parliamentarians from the Kyrgyz Republic, Germany and the UK, representatives of the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Interior, leaders of key political parties, NGOs, presidential candidates, media and representatives of the international community. The discussion focused on the role of international parliamentary observers, the role of the Parliament in Kyrgyzstan in election-related issues, and possible post-election developments in the country.

Russian elections reminder

The Central Election Commission’s deadline for registering for the Election Observation Mission to the Russian Federation’s 4 December Duma elections is Monday **14 November 2011**.

All OSCE PA observers are expected to arrive in Moscow in time to attend the briefings on 1-2 December 2011, and stay for the observer debriefing on the morning of 5 December 2011.

Members are encouraged to deploy to the various regions of the Russian Federation. Please also note that the deadline for hotel reservations in the Marriott Hotel within the group booking is Friday **11 November**.