

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Bureau meets in Dublin



President Riccardo Migliori and Secretary General Spencer Oliver at the Assembly's Bureau Meeting in Dublin.

The leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly convened Wednesday in Dublin for its annual consultation on the eve of the OSCE Ministerial Council. This week's Bureau Meeting is the first formal gathering of the Assembly's leaders since they were elected at the Monaco Annual Session.

In his remarks to the Bureau, OSCE PA President Riccardo Migliori spoke of his past few months of activity and previewed his speech to the Ministerial Council, including concerns he intends to highlight regarding proposed budget cuts to the OSCE's field operations as well as the need to strengthen the Assembly's approach to election observation. Migliori said that the Assembly should formalize its own pre-election monitoring as a vital way to ensure effective election observation.

The president discussed his recent visit to Turkey and reported on the humanitarian crisis on the Turkish-Syrian border, including the more than 200,000 Syrian refugees now living in the wider region. He also reiterated the importance of the OSCE reopening its mission in Georgia.

Migliori also announced two political appointments, naming Gordana Comic (Serbia) as Special Representative for Minorities in Central Europe and Sanchez Amor (Spain) as Special Representative for Border Co-operation.

The Bureau Meeting also included a budget report from OSCE PA Treasurer Roberto Battelli, who said that the Assembly remains in excellent financial health and continues to stay within budget despite maintaining a high level of activities. The PA will finish the year under budget for the 20th consecutive year, he said, and for the fourth year under a frozen budget. He mentioned the need for a modest budget increase in 2013 to cover the continuation of the Assembly's robust level of activity, particularly in the field of election observation.

Members heard reports from past leaders of election observation missions Bureau members offered thanks to Serhiy Shevchuk (Ukraine) for his service as chair of the Assembly's economic and environmental committee. It was his last meeting as a member of the Assembly, as he will not be returning to the new Ukrainian parliament.

The Bureau voted on how to formally include the Parliament of Mongolia in the Assembly now that the country has been accepted as the 57th OSCE participating State. Based on population, Mongolia received three seats in the Assembly, which increases the Assembly's total number of voting delegates to 323.

President Riccardo Migliori will address the foreign ministers Thursday morning. Speeches begin around 9:30 GMT and will stream live online at www.osce.org.

Rules Subcommittee Meets

Earlier Wednesday members of the Subcommittee on the Rules of Procedure met to further examine ways to increase the efficiency of the Assembly. The Rules Subcommittee, chaired by Joao Soares (Portugal), discussed proposals aimed at facilitating the Assembly's work, including the handling of amendments and supplementary items during the Annual Session, operations of the Secretariat, and committee powers and duties.

The Secretariat will now work to collect the necessary signatures and prepare translations into the six official languages for the Members of the Assembly. The Subcommittee will make recommendations to the Standing Committee when it meets in Vienna in February 2013.



Migliori welcomes Moldova-Ukraine agreement

Welcoming an agreement reached last week between Moldova and Ukraine on sustainable management of the Dniestr/Nistru river basin, OSCE PA President Riccardo Migliori noted the importance of sub-regional co-operation on water management.

"The OSCE, in co-operation with the UNECE, has been working intensively in all OSCE sub-regions on water management issues with the aim of fostering regional and sub-regional co-operation," said Migliori speaking on behalf of the OSCE.

"I believe that signing the Treaty is a qualitatively new step in co-operation between the Governments of Moldova and Ukraine which will bring management of the Dniestr/Nistru river basin to a higher level and in line with modern international standards."

The agreement significantly broadens existing co-operation arrangements to cover the entire river basin.