

## PA officials brief OSCE governmental side on Assembly work



Ambassador Andreas Nothelle (left) briefs permanent representatives to the OSCE in Vienna, 22 July 2015.

In recent days, senior officials of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, including Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and the PA's Special Representative in Vienna, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, have briefed foreign ministers, deputy ministers and ambassadors on the PA's ongoing work, in particular the results of the Helsinki +40 Project and the 24th Annual Session in Helsinki.

On Wednesday, Amb. Nothelle formally presented the Helsinki Declaration, adopted 9 July in the Finnish capital, to OSCE participating States' permanent representatives in Vienna. Nothelle highlighted several key themes of the Declaration, including the crisis in and around Ukraine, arms control, the Mediterranean refugee crisis, climate change, water management, terrorism, and threats to civil society.

The briefing on the Helsinki Declaration came two days after Nothelle participated in an election seminar in Vienna in which he described the PA's work on election observation.

On 10 July, President Kanerva presented the PA's Helsinki +40 Project Final Report and highlighted its recommendations for organizational reform at the informal high-level OSCE meeting in Helsinki.



President Ilkka Kanerva presents the Final Report of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project in Helsinki, 10 July 2015.

In presenting the report, Kanerva introduced proposals for reforming and reinvigorating the OSCE to the foreign ministers of the OSCE Troika (Switzerland, Serbia, and Germany), deputy ministers from the Organization's 57 participating States, and other senior officials.

Many of the report's recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the OSCE were endorsed by OSCE parliamentarians on 9 July, when they adopted the 2015 Helsinki Declaration. The document contains a special resolution on organizational reform titled "Helsinki +40: Building the OSCE of the Future."

President Kanerva urged participants to consider the report's wide-ranging proposals and the potential benefits to the OSCE's work. The report synthesizes observations and suggestions offered by leading parliamentarians, diplomats and academics over the course of seminars organized by the PA in conjunction with partnering think tanks in Moscow, Washington, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Belgrade and Helsinki. The project was chaired by Joao Soares (MP, Portugal) and co-ordinated by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, with assistance from Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

## President Kanerva meets Russian State Duma Chair Naryshkin in Moscow

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva met in Moscow on 17 July with Russian State Duma Chairperson and Head of the Russian Delegation to the OSCE PA Sergey Naryshkin for talks that focused on the Assembly's recent Annual Session, Russia's participation in the Assembly's work, developments in and around Ukraine, and Finnish-Russian relations.

Alexey Pushkov, the Chairperson of the Duma's International Affairs Committee, and Leonid Slutsky, the Chairperson of the Duma's CIS Affairs and Eurasian Integration Committee, both of whom are members of the Russian Delegation to the OSCE PA, also participated in the meeting.

President Kanerva shared with the Chairpersons the 2015 Helsinki Declaration, the final document approved by the Assembly at its Annual Session concluding on 9 July in the Finnish capital.

The sides discussed Russia's choice to not send a delegation to the Annual Session following the decision of the

government of Finland to enforce European Union visa bans against Chairperson Naryshkin and several other Russian parliamentarians who had registered to participate.

"The absence of Chairperson Naryshkin and our other Russian colleagues from the Annual Session was regrettable, and obviously a sign of the critical moment we face in the OSCE security architecture. We value the important contribution of the Russian Delegation to the OSCE PA and look forward to their participation in future meetings, particularly as we try to support a diplomatic resolution to the crisis in and around Ukraine," said Kanerva following the meeting.

"Let me underscore, however, that our Assembly's recommendations and pronouncements were approved almost unanimously at the conclusion of our Annual Session. OSCE parliamentarians expressed grave concern about Russia's actions in and around Ukraine and the effect of those actions on the very foundation of the OSCE," he added.