

News from Copenhagen

PA's new Special Representative on South East Europe visits Albania and Montenegro

On his first visit to the region as the OSCE PA's Special Representative on South East Europe earlier this month, Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom) underlined the Assembly's continued commitment to engagement on democracy, the integrity of electoral processes, rule of law, stability and security, human rights, and media freedom.

Pritchard, who also serves as Head of the UK Delegation to the OSCE PA, visited Albania on 13-14 August, and was in Montenegro 15-16 August. Meeting with government representatives and leaders of opposition parties, Pritchard urged political forces in both countries to come to agreements regarding the most urgent steps in the electoral reform process. In Albania, he noted that this is especially important in order to address the OSCE/ODIHR's priority recommendations before local elections next year.

"As my first activity as the Assembly's Special Representative on South East Europe, this week's visit to Albania and Montenegro and to both OSCE field presences has been useful in becoming fully acquainted with the key actors here," Pritchard said. "While the visit has been mostly fact-finding in character, I have also used the opportunity to underline the valuable contributions made by both countries to international Euro-Atlantic activities and to reiterate previous concerns raised by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, including by my predecessor Roberto Battelli."

He added: "I look forward to visiting other countries in South East Europe as soon as possible and continuing the Parliamentary Assembly's commitment to full engagement with the region."

He highlighted recent visits to the region by members of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, who were in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 5-8 June, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, who were in Serbia on 10-12 June.

In Albania, Pritchard met with Vasilika Hysi, Deputy



Speaker of the Assembly, Deputy Prime Minister Senida Mesi, members of the OSCE PA delegation, representatives from various political parties and from civil society. He also met with Robert Wilton, Acting Head of OSCE Presence in Albania, for a discussion on areas of common concern and how to best develop synergy between the PA and the field presence.

In Montenegro, meetings were held with Ambassador Maryse Daviet, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro; Veljko Milonjić, General Director of the General Directorate for Economic and Cultural Diplomacy; and Emil Atanasovski, Regional Director of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, as well as other representatives of the international community in Montenegro. Programme Managers of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro briefed Pritchard on the Mission's various areas of work.

In meetings with interlocutors in Podgorica, Pritchard congratulated Montenegro for progress along its European Union accession track and encouraged authorities to tackle previous recommendations by the ODIHR stemming from its 2016 and 2018 reports. During his visit, Pritchard was accompanied by Amb. Andreas Nothelle, the OSCE PA's Special Representative in Vienna. Pritchard was appointed Special Representative on South East Europe in July.

Upcoming OSCE PA autumn activities

The OSCE PA is gearing up for a busy autumn period, with several election observation missions scheduled and the 17th Autumn Meeting taking place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 3-6 October.

Hosted by the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the 2018 Autumn Meeting will include a Parliamentary Conference on "Promoting Security Dialogue in Central Asia And Beyond" and a Mediterranean Forum on "Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Mediterranean: Addressing Migration, Trade and Environmental Challenges."

The meeting will provide OSCE parliamentarians an opportunity to explore ways to counter new challenges and threats in border areas and strengthen citizens' engagement in building secure societies.

Election observation missions will be deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 7 October parliamentary elections, Georgia for the 28 October presidential election, and the United States for the 6 November midterm elections.

Former Third Committee Rapporteur visits Secretariat



Coskun Coruz, former Third Committee Rapporteur and Head of the Netherlands Delegation to the PA, visited the International Secretariat on 14 August for a meeting with OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella. Coruz, who served as rapporteur of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions in 2010-2011, discussed with SG Montella current issues on the OSCE agenda.