

## Migliori calls for OSCE reform, begins new chapter in election observing

OSCE PA President Riccardo Migliori addressed the OSCE Ministerial Council in Dublin last week and called for reforms in the OSCE that would make it more transparent and accountable and more open to receiving the views of civil society and NGOs.

The PA President also criticized the ODIHR for failing to live up to the 1997 Co-operation Agreement on election monitoring, saying: “The Parliamentary Assembly has adhered to this agreement in letter and spirit for fifteen years. Unfortunately, the ODIHR has not. Our opinion, therefore, is that this agreement is no longer valid and is no longer operative.”

Migliori had previously called for an orthodox implementation of the Co-operation Agreement in speeches to OSCE bodies in Warsaw and Vienna. He also raised the problems with the ODIHR in the OSCE PA Standing Committee meeting in Tirana in October.

After repeated problems with the ODIHR on missions this autumn, Migliori decided, with the backing of the OSCE PA Bureau at their meeting in Dublin, to put an end to the constant acrimony and fighting between the ODIHR and the Assembly over the interpretation and implementation of the Agreement.

Going forward, the Assembly will continue to conduct election observation missions, complete with standard briefings and deployments, co-operating with the ODIHR and other parliamentary assemblies whenever possible on a case-by-case basis.



In a meeting in Dublin on 7 December with the incoming Chair-in-Office, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, President Migliori said that the Assembly would be open to further discussion on how to improve election observation by the OSCE.

In his speech to the Ministerial, Migliori also emphasized the need to strengthen the OSCE’s core work, which takes place in the field. “The backbone of the OSCE is the field missions and their programmes,” he said. “Our Assembly has consistently called for protecting the budgets of the field missions and to avoid constructing a large bureaucracy.”

The Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure, chaired by Joao Soares of Portugal, also met in Dublin and considered various proposed changes to the Rules, including particularly how supplementary items will be processed at the next Annual Session.

## OSCE Parliamentarians observe elections in Romania



Romania demonstrated a pluralistic political culture and an established democratic process in the 9 December parliamentary elections, concluded observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in a statement issued Monday.

“These elections were a convincing demonstration that Romania benefits from established structures for the conduct of elections,” said Wolfgang Grossruck, Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly limited election observation mission. “The ability to deliver democratic elections in the current highly polarized environment indicates that Romania has

strong potential to overcome challenges.”

The election campaign was largely overshadowed by the power struggle between the President of Romania and the Prime Minister, said the observers. Sharp rhetoric and reported pressure on authorities undermined confidence but did not challenge the overall conduct of democratic elections.

The Romanian observation mission was the fourth election observation mission in the last two years that the PA conducted independently without the logistical support of the ODIHR. Diplomats in Bucharest praised the mission for its balanced and credible statement.

The PA opened its mission on 26 November. Grossruck and Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle conducted a pre-electoral visit on 28 November, meeting with high-level election officials, politicians and representatives of the international community in Romania.

Amb. Nothelle served as the chief of staff for the mission, which included 17 observers with 11 parliamentarians from ten countries. Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk and Senior Advisor Andreas Baker supported the mission.