

Comic and Cederfelt lead election observation in Tajikistan



Gordana Comic and Margareta Cederfelt at a polling station in Dushanbe.

A team of 34 observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is in Tajikistan observing the 6 November presidential election.

The OSCE Chair-in-Office, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara, appointed Gordana Comic (Serbia), Rapporteur of the OSCE PA's Third General Committee, as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic appointed Margareta Cederfelt of Sweden to lead the OSCE PA's observation mission to the presidential election in Tajikistan.

"The development of democracy in Tajikistan is important to the stability of the wider region given the country's strategic location," Comic said upon her arrival in Dushanbe on Sunday. "It is our hope that Tajikistan's electoral process upholds the country's OSCE commitments, and we are prepared to honestly and accurately assess that

after the election."

The parliamentary observers have received several days of briefings by stakeholders in the election process, including from candidates who were not able to register or are not participating in the election. Officials from the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda, media representatives and analysts and international experts, including from the OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, have also briefed the PA observers.

The OSCE PA observation mission is undertaken in close co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR and with the European Parliament. This is the third election the OSCE PA has observed in Tajikistan since 2006. The preliminary post-election statement will be delivered by Ms. Comic at a press conference on Thursday, which Ms. Cederfelt will also address.

While in Tajikistan, a number of Members also took the opportunity to visit and participate in a briefing prepared by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan on its activities in the country. The field presence, one of the largest in the OSCE, has been active in the country for almost 20 years and conducts a wide range of activities in all three OSCE dimensions.

The OSCE PA observation mission is supported by Programme Director Anna Chernova, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk and Senior Adviser Andreas Baker from the International Secretariat.

President Krivokapic addresses Permanent Council in Vienna

OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic addressed the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna last Thursday, calling for more active participation of the Parliamentary Assembly in the Organization. The Assembly president called on ambassadors in Vienna to focus on the OSCE's strengths, particularly its inclusive nature.

"Further strengthening of the position of the Parliamentary Assembly will significantly contribute to enhancing transparency, legitimacy and effectiveness of the OSCE as a whole," said Mr. Krivokapic.

As a parliamentarian from Montenegro and as a citizen of a region that has benefited greatly from the OSCE, Mr. Krivokapic said he deeply respects the work of the OSCE. But the citizens of OSCE countries should have a bigger role in international co-operation, he stressed.

The elected parliamentarians should play a greater role in certain high-ranking appointments and the adoption of the OSCE budget, he said.

On election observation, he said that the OSCE must create good synergy, and expressed optimism that despite

intra-organizational challenges over recent years, there are indications of improving mutual co-operation and harmonization between the OSCE's institutions.

During his visit to Vienna, Mr. Krivokapic also met with the President of Austria Heinz Fischer, former head of the Austrian delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in its early years, and OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier.

In his meeting with President Fischer, Mr. Krivokapic discussed the role of the OSCE on the international stage, with particular focus on the challenges the organization is facing with the approaching 40th anniversary of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

In his conversation with Secretary General Zannier, President Krivokapic spoke about promoting co-operation between the Assembly and the other structures of the OSCE. They agreed that the PA, as one of the pillars of the Organization, should be more involved in OSCE policy formulation.

His visit was supported by the staff of the OSCE PA Liaison Office in Vienna.