

## PA team visits Baku in preparation for the 2014 Annual Session



Odile Lelarge, Gustavo Pallares, Bahar Muradova and Semyon Dzakhayev

In preparation for the Assembly's 23rd Annual Session, to be held in Azerbaijan from 28 June to 2 July 2014, members of the International Secretariat are currently conducting a preparatory visit to Baku. Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhayev and Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge are following an extensive programme in Baku co-ordinating all logistical aspects of the Annual Session.

The conference team has met with the leadership of the Parliament of Azerbaijan including the Deputy Speaker and Head of the Azerbaijani Delegation to the OSCE PA Bahar Muradova. Deputy Speaker Muradova welcomed the strengthening

of relations between Azerbaijan and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and expressed assurances for the success of the Annual Session.

The representatives of the Secretariat also met the top administrators of the Parliament including Secretary General Safa Mizzayev, Head of the International Relations Department Rashid Abrahamov, and General Manager Firudin Hajiyev. In discussions, Azerbaijani officials assured the Secretariat representatives that all participants would be welcomed to Azerbaijan.

The Secretary of the Azerbaijani Delegation to the PA Aynur Nurahmadova, who is co-ordinating the preparations of the Annual Session with the Secretariat, accompanied the conference team during its visit.

The Secretariat's team will work closely with the staff of the Azerbaijani Parliament in the coming months to ensure that all organizational requirements for a productive session are well implemented. The Annual Session is expected to take place in the Fairmont Congress Centre in Baku.

## Bernhard and Oliver discuss the legal character of the OSCE



Maria Chepurina, Spencer Oliver and John Bernhard

Ambassador John Bernhard, the former Permanent Representative of Denmark to the OSCE, visited the PA's International Secretariat in Copenhagen on Tuesday, meeting with Secretary General Spencer Oliver for discussions focused on the issue of the Organization's legal character and the possibility of adopting a constituent document for the OSCE.

Amb. Bernhard, who chairs the Informal Working Group on Strengthening the Legal Framework of the OSCE in Vienna, offered views on the issue of enhancing the legal status of the OSCE. Mr. Oliver also referred to the PA's many resolutions that have been adopted regarding the question of the OSCE's legal character going back to 1992.

Most recently, at the 2013 Annual Session in Istanbul, the Assembly adopted a resolution calling on OSCE participating States "to tackle further important reforms such as the question of a constituent document for the OSCE which would fully respect the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter and other key commitments of the OSCE."

Secretary General Oliver and Amb. Bernhard agreed to continue discussing the matter going forward.

## SIPRI representatives visit Copenhagen for Helsinki +40 talks

In a visit to the OSCE PA's Copenhagen headquarters, former OSCE PA President Goran Lenmarker and Dr. Ian Anthony, Research Co-ordinator at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), met with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Programme Officer Maria Chepurina on Wednesday.

Discussions focused on co-operation between the OSCE PA and SIPRI in preparations for the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Mr. Lenmarker, who now chairs the Governing Board of SIPRI, and Dr. Anthony offered ideas on potential initiatives the OSCE PA and SIPRI can jointly undertake as the anniversary approaches.

In a meeting that was joined by Programme Director Anna Chernova, Communications Director Richard Solash, and Editorial Director Nat Parry, the delegation also discussed a range of pressing issues for the OSCE area, including the current situation in Ukraine, and the unique forum for dialogue that the Parliamentary Assembly provides.

SIPRI and Secretariat staff agreed to continue close consultations on future initiatives.



Maria Chepurina, Goran Lenmarker, Spencer Oliver and Ian Anthony