

In Ukraine, President Kanerva highlights security and humanitarian concerns



Ilkka Kanerva meets with internally displaced persons in Artemivsk, 12 November 2015.

In meetings in Ukraine last week with government officials, parliamentary and military leaders, OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) monitors, and internally displaced persons, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) discussed a range of policy- and security-related issues, and highlighted humanitarian concerns related to the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine.

Kanerva met on 11 November with Parliament Chairman Volodymyr Groysman and parliamentarians from the OSCE PA's Ukrainian Delegation for discussions on the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the country's reform process. The humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine and the work of the OSCE were among other issues discussed.

The following day, the President visited Donetsk oblast to

survey the security situation and highlight the humanitarian tragedy resulting from the conflict. In the city of Artemivsk, Kanerva met with a group of internally displaced persons at a dormitory facility and held a town hall-style meeting with several hundred students who have been resettled from a university in separatist-occupied Horlivka. He was accompanied by Ukraine's OSCE PA Delegation Head, Artur Gerasymov.

Kanerva met with local officials in Artemivsk before traveling to Kramatorsk for discussions with officials from the Donetsk Regional State Administration. He also met with local civil society representatives, United Nations aid workers, and SMM monitors in Kramatorsk.

On 13 November President Kanerva met with Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin in Kyiv. The sides discussed the role of the OSCE in monitoring and mediating the Ukraine crisis, and the work of the Normandy format, among other issues. Kanerva also met with Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan, the Chief Monitor of the SMM.

The President was accompanied in his visit to Ukraine by OSCE PA Director of Presidential Administration Roberto Montella, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk and Director of Communications Richard Solash.

PA humanitarian Chair Santos addresses refugee crisis in visit to Brussels and Geneva

In an ongoing visit to Brussels and Geneva this week, the Chair of the OSCE PA's Third Committee, Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal), is meeting with a range of officials to discuss the work of the international community in responding to the migrant and refugee crisis impacting Europe and the Mediterranean region. In meetings with former OSCE PA Member and current European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, key Members of the European Parliament, and representatives of non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, Santos was thoroughly briefed on the efforts of the international community to provide a co-ordinated response to the crisis.

Key points that Santos has raised with interlocutors include the need to co-ordinate global solutions to the crisis, and to this end she emphasized that the OSCE PA will remain engaged



Isabel Santos (right) and Commissioner Christos Stylianides meet in Brussels, 16 November 2015.

with European and international institutions in working to implement a holistic approach. She also noted that following the Paris attacks, there is an even greater need to address this issue with political courage, co-operation, solidarity and novel approaches.

She is accompanied in her visit by OSCE PA Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

Bundestag holds debate on upcoming German OSCE Chairmanship

The German Bundestag held a plenary debate last week on the German Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2016, following up on a similar debate six weeks earlier. Featuring a report by the government on the priorities of the upcoming Chairmanship, the debate on 12 November included calls for providing new impetus towards establishing a security community based on dialogue and trust.

In the earlier debate, the Head of Germany's OSCE PA

Delegation, PA Vice-President Doris Barnett, emphasized the necessity of strengthening the parliamentary side of the OSCE and giving its resolutions binding force. Deputy Head of the Delegation Jürgen Klimke called for reforms related to the Helsinki +40 Process to be advanced. In last week's debate, other German PA members raised issues including using the 2016 Chairmanship to advance disarmament issues, and to strengthen the OSCE as a whole.