

News from Copenhagen

President Muttonen's visit to Secretariat focuses on priorities and PA activities



President Christine Muttonen speaks to Secretariat staff in Copenhagen, 7 September.

In her first visit to OSCE PA headquarters in Copenhagen since being elected President of the Assembly at the Annual Session in July, Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) discussed with Secretary General Roberto Montella and staff her priorities for the coming year, as well as upcoming Assembly events and presidential appointments.

Expressing satisfaction with the general management of the Secretariat, President Muttonen stressed in particular her appreciation for the adaptability of the staff in supporting responses to emerging challenges and crises, for example the recent coup attempt in Turkey and its aftermath. She spoke about the recent visit she made to Turkey together with other senior members of the PA, noting the importance of continuing these sorts of high-profile activities. She also expressed her view that the OSCE's governmental side sometimes needs parliamentarians to speak out on sensitive issues.

Secretary General Montella briefed the President on the daily work of the Secretariat, emphasizing in particular his

ongoing efforts to modernize and further institutionalize the Parliamentary Assembly, noting that following the introduction earlier this year of staff rules and regulations, he is continuing his work by introducing financial and administrative rules for the organization. He also discussed his work in developing and enhancing the PA's external relations, both within the OSCE family and with partner organizations. In this regard, he stressed the fruitful discussions held last week with officials from the OSCE/ODIHR, PACE, European Parliament, and NATO PA at an election observation brainstorming retreat north of Copenhagen.

Regarding election observation, President Muttonen also discussed with Secretariat staff the status of ongoing and upcoming missions. Other topics of discussion included the President's calendar, including upcoming speeches she will deliver in Strasbourg, Warsaw, Skopje and Vienna. She also decided to re-appoint a number of OSCE PA Special Representatives, and to create the newly established position of Special Representative on Mediation, which will be held by OSCE PA President Emeritus Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland).



President Christine Muttonen (front, center) with staff in Copenhagen, 7 September.

Santos and Barnett address OSCE Chairmanship event on anti-Gypsyism in Berlin



Isabel Santos speaks about parliamentary contributions to combating discrimination against Roma and Sinti, 6 September.

The Parliamentary Assembly was represented at a high-level OSCE event in Berlin confronting racism and xenophobia against Roma and Sinti on Tuesday by OSCE PA Vice-President Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal), Treasurer and Head of Germany's OSCE PA Delegation Doris Barnett, and Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (MP, Cyprus). United States Helsinki Commission staffer Mischa Thompson represented the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin.

Participants at the event agreed that strengthening coalition-building among political leaders is needed to effectively counter discrimination against Roma and Sinti. Santos focused her remarks on the role of parliamentarians.

"In addressing discrimination and racially motivated crimes against Roma and Sinti, parliamentarians have an important role to play by enacting or strengthening our laws in order to protect these vulnerable groups," she said. "But as public figures we must do more than that: we should also raise our voices in support of Roma and Sinti communities and unequivocally condemn hate crimes and all forms of discrimination against these communities."

Treasurer Barnett also spoke about the special responsibilities of public servants. "We as politicians should use the opportunity of field visits in order to identify problems in implementation of political decisions," she said.

The event, hosted by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, was co-organized with ODIHR, the Council of Europe and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, and brought together more than 130 participants, including members of the OSCE PA, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and of national parliaments, along with high-ranking governmental representatives, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders in the fight against anti-Gypsyism.