

Seminar considers conclusions of OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project



Participants at the OSCE PA FIIA seminar, Helsinki, 5 July 2015

Participants at a seminar organized by the OSCE PA and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs discussed on Sunday the conclusions of the OSCE PA's Final Report of the Helsinki +40 Project, "Building the OSCE of the Future." Opened by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland), Co-Chair of the Helsinki +40 Project, the seminar included remarks by OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Special Co-ordinator of the Helsinki Project, and long-time Finnish Diplomat Ambassador Jaakko Itoniemi, who has been involved in the Helsinki process since the 1970s.

In his opening remarks, Kanerva discussed the findings of the Project, which consisted of five seminars held from Sept. 2014 to May 2015. "Our Helsinki +40 seminars have demonstrated a general agreement among participants that the OSCE must continue to be a bridge between East and West, but that in doing so, it must also renew its focus on adherence to its core principles and commitments – particularly in the areas of territorial integrity and human rights," he said.

Oliver presented an overview of the OSCE PA's Final Report and discussed the Project's origins. He described the

seminars as a "useful meeting of the minds" between experts, diplomats and parliamentarians who have deep understanding of issues facing the OSCE.

In his presentation, Ambassador Itoniemi discussed the innovative approaches that emerged from the preparatory meetings leading up to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. He noted that the Helsinki Final Act is not just an agreement on human rights, it is a strategy of how to apply in practice the commitments undertaken in 1975.

Also speaking at the seminar were Teija Tiilikainen, Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs; Ambassador Katja Pehrman, Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE; Andrei Zagorski, Head of Department for Arms Control and Conflict Resolution, Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Nina Suomalainen, former Deputy Head of Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ivan Vejvoda, Senior Vice President, German Marshall Fund of the United States; and Petri Hakkarainen, Acting Director for Policy Planning and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The speakers provided feedback on the conclusions of the OSCE PA's Final Report of the Helsinki +40 Project. They agreed with the PA's recommendation that the OSCE's field activities should be strengthened and that the Organization should place greater emphasis on conflict prevention. There was also general agreement that there is no need for a new Decalogue of Principles, but rather better implementation of the ten principles already agreed to in the Helsinki Final Act.

Standing Committee tables 13 supplementary items, confirms new Secretary General

By a vote of 46 to 3, the Standing Committee on Sunday confirmed OSCE PA Director of Presidential Administration Roberto Montella as the next Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, with a five-year term beginning on 1 January 2016. A total of 13 supplementary items were allocated to the three general committees, with two having fallen due to a number of signatures being invalidated. Four supplementary items will be debated by the First Committee, three by the Second Committee, and four by the Third Committee. Two items, "Helsinki +40: Building the OSCE of the Future" and "The Continuation of Clear, Gross and Uncorrected Violations of OSCE Commitments and International Norms by the Russian Federation," will be debated in plenary session.

Earlier, more than 20 parliamentarians took the floor to debate the decision of the Finnish government not to grant visas to six members of the OSCE PA Russian Delegation who are on the European Union's travel ban. In a full and frank exchange of views, parliamentarians expressed opinions both for and against the decision, with several stating that it is important to continue open dialogue on resolving the crisis in

and around Ukraine, among other issues.

Following this discussion, Treasurer Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia) presented his report on the finances of the Assembly, noting that it remains in good fiscal health. After a brief discussion of the OSCE PA's audit procedure, the Assembly's budget for fiscal year 2015/2016 was unanimously adopted.

In Spencer Oliver's final address to an Annual Session Standing Committee as Secretary General, he expressed gratitude for the work of parliamentarians that have made the PA so effective in its activities, including election observation. He also reported on the conclusions of the Helsinki +40 Project, which he described as a very useful endeavor.

The meeting was chaired by President Ilkka Kanerva.

Programme ~ Monday, 5 July

09.00 – 12.00	Plenary Session / Helsinki +40 Commemorative Event (<i>Finlandia Hall</i>)
14.00 – 15.30	Plenary Session continued (<i>Finlandia Hall</i>)
16.00 – 17.30	Third Committee (<i>Veranda Hall 1&2</i>)
16.00 – 17.30	First Committee (<i>Finlandia Hall</i>)