

REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY 12TH AUTUMN MEETING BUDVA, MONTENEGRO 13-15 OCTOBER 2013



REPORT ON THE 2013 AUTUMN MEETING OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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Summary



The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly holds an Autumn Meeting every year to enhance inter-parliamentary dialogue on important topics related to OSCE commitments. Previous Autumn Meetings have been held in Slovenia, Malta, Montenegro, Greece, Italy, Canada, Croatia and Albania.

Parliamentarians from across the OSCE area gathered in Budva on 13-15 October for the 2013 Autumn Meeting, consisting of meetings of the Mediterranean Forum, the OSCE PA's Standing Committee, the Bureau, and three sessions of the Parliamentary Conference "Addressing Transnational Threats and Protecting Human Rights: The Role of the OSCE."

OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic opened the Mediterranean Forum with a call for parliamentarians to ensure that the OSCE's Helsinki +40 process incorporates a strong Mediterranean component, and urged all parliamentarians from the Mediterranean to add their voices to the process.

Also addressing the Mediterranean Forum was PACE President Jean-Claude Mignon, who stressed the need for co-operation and parliamentary dialogue on both sides of the Mediterranean to meet the region's challenges. In the second session of the Mediterranean Forum, parliamentarians debated the situation in Syria. Opened by Igor Luksic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, the debate included members of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and OSCE participating States from across the region.

The OSCE PA's Standing Committee of heads of delegations met on 13 October to discuss ongoing activities of the Assembly, including the recent election observation mission to Azerbaijan. The OSCE Special Co-ordinator for that mission, Michel Voisin (France), and the head of the OSCE PA delegation, Doris Barnett (Germany), presented their reports, providing for a lively exchange of views that

included the participation of Bahar Muradova, head of Azerbaijan's delegation to the PA. Makis Voridis (Greece), who served as deputy head of the PA delegation in Azerbaijan, shared his views on the election at the Bureau meeting on 12 October.

Opening the Parliamentary Conference, President Krivokapic noted that Montenegro is in a unique position – geographically and historically – to build bridges across the OSCE area. Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic highlighted Montenegro's approach to multi-ethnic dialogue.

"Our joint results will be measured by our capacity to build bridges – bridges of interstate, parliamentary and regional co-operation."

OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic

The three sessions of the conference were chaired by Vice-Presidents Alain Neri (France), George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Isabel Pozuelo (Spain).

Session One featured addresses by Alexey Lyzhenkov, Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats (OSCE Secretariat); Nikolay Kovalev (Russian Federation); Omurbek Tekebaev (Kyrgyzstan); Olim Salimzoda (Tajikistan); and Mohammad Alam Ezedyar (Afghanistan).

Second Committee Chair Roza Aknazarova (Kyrgyzstan) was the keynote speaker for Session Two, "Security Effects of the Economic/Financial Crisis," focusing her remarks on the potential for green growth, education and media professionalism in addressing the impacts of the crisis on all three dimensions.

Session Three, "Integration of Diverse Societies," was addressed by the new OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors and Gordana Comic (Serbia), Rapporteur of the PA's Third Committee and Special Representative on National Minorities in Central and South East Europe.

Mediterranean Forum



Chaired by President Ranko Krivokapic, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Mediterranean Forum was held in two sessions on 13 October. Under the theme "The Mediterranean: A Union of Civilizations," the Forum included a debate on the situation in Syria.

President Krivokapic opened the meeting with a call for parliamentarians to ensure that the OSCE's ongoing Helsinki +40 process incorporates a strong Mediterranean component. He pointed out that in the Helsinki Final Act, an entire chapter was devoted to the Mediterranean, and since then, the importance of the region for the OSCE has only grown. "As such, I urge all parliamentarians from the Mediterranean to add their voice to the Helsinki +40 process," he said.

Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

PACE President Jean-Claude Mignon stressed the need for co-operation and parliamentary dialogue on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

He said that responsibility must be shared to meet the challenges of refugees, the humanitarian consequences of the war in Syria, democratic transformations in the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. He added that the PACE



Partner for Democracy programme is a powerful tool for achieving progress on these topics.

President Mignon concluded by saying that the OSCE PA and PACE should make full use of all the tools of dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy to find appropriate solutions to common problems. Mignon emphasized the opportunity presented for closer co-operation between the PA and PACE to assist the region's aspiring democracies, noting that both organizations have extensive and complementary experience in these matters.

Igor Luksic, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Montenegro

Opened by Igor Luksic, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, the second session of the Mediterranean Forum debated the situation in Syria.

The Minister pointed out that countries of the Mediterranean are undergoing a process of historic transformation that requires support of the international partners.

He added that in order to have a successful democratic transition, it is necessary to introduce concrete measures and projects that will strengthen democratic institutions, ensure freedom of speech and expression, empower civil society and encourage economic growth.

Debate

The debate featured the participation of members of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation – including the Palestinian National Council – and many OSCE participating States from across the region. Several delegates agreed that the response to the Syria crisis has so far represented a failure of the international system and called for greater commitment before the situation deteriorates further.



Parliamentary Conference Opening Session



Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic addresses the opening session of the Parliamentary Conference.

Opening the Parliamentary Conference on the theme “Addressing Transnational Threats and Protecting Human Rights: The Role of the OSCE,” President Krivokapic noted that Montenegro serves in a unique role to build bridges across the OSCE.

“Montenegro has always been the bridge of cultures between the different civilizations in the Mediterranean, a bridge between the East and West, North and South. Exactly that spirit of merging different cultures and ideas represents the core being of the OSCE itself. The famous south Slavic Nobel prize winner Ivo Andric has written that from all of the things that man can create, bridges are most valuable and most important. This is why our joint results will be measured through our capacity build bridges – bridges of interstate, parliamentary and regional co-operation,” he said.

The Helsinki +40 process is a worthwhile effort to revitalize the vision and the mission of the OSCE as well as to enhance its effectiveness, Krivokapic noted. “Its outcome should mark a new époque of the OSCE’s development: reform our organization, deepen the existing comparative advantages, strengthen mutual trust, provide mechanisms which will give an answer to new challenges and overcome current functional problems which diminish the efficiency in performing,” he said.

“With regards to that I would especially like to emphasize the call from the Istanbul Declaration to the Ministerial Council that it is necessary to provide full, effective and long-term mandates to the field missions, which are playing the key part in sharing the values of the OSCE in the overall democratization and reform in our member countries,” President Krivokapic said.

Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro



Milo Djukanovic

Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic spoke about the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security and highlighted Montenegro as a country that values multi-ethnic dialogue, saying that

one of Montenegro’s most important assets is its multiculturalism.

“Montenegro is a country of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity,” he said. “We are fully aware of the importance of dialogue and tolerance. Promoting dialogue is the maxim of European and global integration and that is the basis of Montenegro’s approach.”

Echoing President Krivokapic, the Prime Minister spoke about the value of the Helsinki +40 process, noting that it should enable the OSCE to be used more effectively. He also discussed the importance of upholding human dimension commitments.

“We should abstain from any measures that infringe on human rights and fundamental freedoms,” he said.







Parliamentary Conference Session One



Alain Neri

Chairing the first session of the Parliamentary Conference on Addressing Transnational Threats and Protecting Human Rights, Vice-President Alain Neri (France) stressed the importance of upholding fundamental freedoms in the fight against international terrorism. He recalled OSCE commitments and emphasized that strengthening democracy, including respect for human, social, economic and cultural rights, is the best way to counter violent extremism. Neri discussed the special role of the OSCE field presences in this process, particularly when it comes to early-warning mechanisms.

**Alexey Lyzhenkov,
OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to
Address Transnational Threats**



Alexey Lyzhenkov

The keynote speaker from the OSCE Secretariat, Alexey Lyzhenkov, who serves as Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats, explained the development of the work of the OSCE in this field.

He highlighted the “Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism” which was adopted in 2012 by the Ministerial Council, as an important tool in strengthening the Organization’s work.

Lyzhenkov discussed four areas within the OSCE strategy to combat terrorism that have specific links to human rights: promoting an international legal framework against terrorism; countering extremism and radicalization that

lead to terrorism; developing a comprehensive travel document security programme; and countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. He also highlighted the OSCE Strategic Framework for Police-Related Activities, which promotes policing that addresses the early detection of radicalization and violent extremism and facilitates sharing of best practices.

**Mohammed Alam Ezedyar,
First Deputy Speaker of the Upper
House of the Parliament of Afghanistan**

Mohammed Alam Ezedyar provided an update on the security situation in Afghanistan, emphasizing that terrorism is not restricted to one geographical area. It can happen anywhere, he said, and harm people across religious, ethnic, linguistic and political lines. From America to Africa to Asia, he said, terrorists use a similar strategy of threats and violence. Muslims are often the foremost victims of terrorists, Ezedyar pointed out.



Mohammed Alam Ezedyar

He also argued that terrorism cannot be fought with military means alone. Rather, a comprehensive approach is needed to address its social, economic, political, ideological and cultural roots. He advocated stronger international co-operation to address these root causes and fight violent extremism across the world.

**Nikolay Kovalev,
Head of the Russian Delegation to the
OSCE PA**



Nikolay Kovalev

Nikolay Kovalev (Russian Federation) focused his remarks on the situation in the South Mediterranean, noting the dangers of the Syrian crisis in regards to the potential availability

Parliamentary Conference Session One

of technology and materials for weapons of mass destruction to criminals and extremists. Consequently, helping Syrian rebels might increase the spread of small arms and light weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction in the region, he argued. Kovalev proposed several concrete steps in order to fight terrorism: introduction of a unified international arrest warrant; development of a unified marking system for explosives; and the incorporation of international counterterrorism provisions into the national legislation of OSCE participating States.

Kovalev regretted that there has been no real progress in reaching common security goals in the OSCE area, and stressed that the continued divisions of East and West is one of the main transnational threats to common security.

Omurbek Tekebaev, Member of Kyrgyzstan's Delegation to the OSCE PA



Omurbek Tekebaev warned against the influence of radical political movements in spreading terrorism. He expressed concern over extremist political forces gaining power after the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, and argued that the

current instability in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria is a legacy of the previous authoritarian rule, long-term political stagnation and corruption. He underlined the necessity for developing socio-political institutions in order to promote a peaceful transfer from authoritarian rule to democracy, in order to avoid unpredictable consequences.

Tekebaev stressed that the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014 may have serious repercussions for the spread of terrorism. He argued that the Central Asian states face challenges similar to those that sparked unrest in the Middle East: authoritarian rule, corruption, and high rates of unemployment among youth. It is therefore crucial to strengthen the principles of democracy in the region, and urged the OSCE to pay close attention to this issue, he said.

Olim Salimzoda, Head of Tajikistan's Delegation to the OSCE PA

The Head of Delegation from Tajikistan, Olim Salimzoda, identified the need to assist Afghanistan with peace-building and the fight against drug trafficking as top priorities for the international community in light of the upcoming withdrawal of NATO forces.



Although Afghanistan has vast potential in terms of developing natural resources in the years ahead, he argued that there is a great threat of terrorist and extremist forces ramping up their activities, which can again destabilize the situation in the country and the region as a whole. Preventing such destabilization would require developing and mobilizing the internal capacity of the State as well as consolidating the efforts of the international community. Salimzoda explained that Tajikistan will remain a buffer zone, especially for the narcotics threat coming from Afghanistan.

He pointed out that Tajikistan co-operates actively with the international community, including the OSCE, in providing territorial resources such as airspace and information resources.

Debate

In the ensuing debate Members discussed the need for genuine dialogue and increased international co-operation to fight terrorism. The danger of nuclear or chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists was discussed and several Members emphasized the need to increase oversight and impose sanctions if such weapons are not destroyed.

Several participants stressed that human rights cannot be ignored in the fight against terrorism. In addition, Members debated how to curb the financing of terrorism and the dangerous link between the unemployment of young people and recruitment into terrorist groups.

Parliamentary Conference Session Two



The second session of the Parliamentary Conference, chaired by Vice-President George Tsereteli (Georgia), focused on the security effects of the economic and financial crisis.

In his opening remarks, Tsereteli underscored the gravity of the economic situation over the past several years and argued that action was needed on all levels – from the local to the national to the regional to the international – to alleviate the most painful effects of the crisis. Underlying all these concerns, he said, were the collective memories of previous eras of economic turbulence, and the resulting political instability and war.

“Despite our political, regional and national differences,” he said, “we know that dialogue is always better than conflict, and we know that mutual trust is better than mutual fear and animosity.” It is in that spirit of co-operation, Tsereteli pointed out, that the parliamentarians of the OSCE gather several times a year to debate the issues of the day. “We bring not just expertise as policy makers or democratic legitimacy as elected representatives, but also the passion and national pride of our countries, and the common desire of us all for a world at peace, stability and prosperity that we can pass on to our children and grandchildren,” he said.

Parliamentarians have a key role to play in overseeing and debating the economic policies implemented by governments, Tsereteli noted. As a unique forum bringing together representatives from North America, Europe, and Asia, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has a central role to encourage greater economic solidarity, foster policy co-ordination between participating States, and to discuss new approaches in tackling the economic crisis and promoting growth, he said.



Roza Aknazarova, Chair of the OSCE PA’s Second Committee and Head of Kyrgyzstan’s Delegation to the OSCE PA

In her keynote presentation, the Chairperson of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Second Committee analyzed the multifaceted and far-reaching impacts of the economic crisis in the OSCE region. “It is essential to remember that the crisis does not only have a socio-economic dimension, it has a profound impact on all three dimensions of security,” she stressed.

Aknazarova reminded participants that since the economic crisis took hold in 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly has been actively engaged in developing measures and finding solutions to counter its negative effects. In 2009, a number of anti-crisis initiatives were introduced by the Vilnius Declaration. The financial crisis also topped the agenda at the Annual Sessions in Oslo, Belgrade, Monaco and Istanbul. In Monaco, the participating States came to the conclusion that the consequences of austerity measures have been, to a large extent, counterproductive, and urged instead for a “green growth” development model as a means of boosting economic output. The Annual Session in Istanbul focused, *inter alia*, on countering negative migration tendencies generated by the crisis and the impoverishment of some parts of the OSCE area.

Another challenge for the OSCE region resulting from the financial crisis is the marginalization of immigrants and national minorities, as well as a surge in xenophobia, Aknazarova stressed. The widening of the inequality gap also leads to the expansion of transnational crime, including money launder-

Parliamentary Conference Session Two



Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjijanni of Cyprus's delegation.

ing, illegal migration and illicit trade, extremism and terrorism.

Overall, Aknazarova said, the economic crisis has had a profoundly destabilizing effect on the OSCE area. Its consequences include a severe decrease in public trust in state institutions which can lead to political instability and civil unrest. Countering these threats is a key component of inclusive security-building measures.

Aknazarova also suggested a set of measures to be pursued by the OSCE PA General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment, as well as the OSCE participating States, which include further development of parliamentary dialogue and engagement of parliamentary diplomacy in solving the economic problems faced by the OSCE region; the consolidation of international efforts to counter the consequences of the financial crisis; and the organization of an event, in conjunction with European institutions and the IMF, to share best practices in countering the crisis and develop common policies.

She discussed the importance of promoting



James Walsh of Ireland participates in the debate.

green growth, as well as investing in education. Further, media professionals should strive to create an atmosphere of tolerance in all participating States to avoid unfair scapegoating of migrants and national minorities.

Debate

Session two concluded with a lively general debate in which Members addressed a range of issues pertaining to the economic and financial crisis and its implications in the OSCE area. Delegates spoke about strengthening the response capacity of national governments and developing co-ordinated approaches across borders. One parliamentarian noted that the crisis will only be solved when the underlying causes of economic instability are addressed, particularly fiscal policies that enable state expenditures to exceed GDP. The north-south economic divide was highlighted as an ongoing concern for Europe, with a Nordic parliamentarian stressing the need for northern countries to learn solidarity and southern countries to improve productivity.

Another concern raised was the effect of the economic crisis on national budgets and defence spending, which could in turn undermine security commitments and contribute to a rise in peripheral threats. High unemployment is not politically sustainable one parliamentarian noted, and is facilitating the rise of extremist political parties.

The need to promote growth was touched on, with particular focus on supporting innovation, promoting free trade and providing a sound business climate for small- and medium-sized enterprises. Banking sector reform was also highlighted as an international priority.





Parliamentary Conference Session Three



OSCÉ PA Vice-President Isabel Pozuelo (Spain) chaired session three of the Parliamentary Conference on 15 October. In her opening remarks, she noted that there are few issues that affect the whole of the OSCE region to the extent of migration and integration. From North America to Western Europe, to Eastern Europe to Central Asia, Pozuelo pointed out that migration is an enduring fact of life for all OSCE countries.

Prejudice and intolerance continue to pose a threat to security and stability in the OSCE area, she said. Hate crimes and incidents motivated by racism, xenophobia, or related intolerance, including against specific religious groups, can escalate rapidly into broader social unrest, which can be particularly dangerous in post-conflict situations in which ethnicity has played a part. Such incidents can escalate into wider disturbances even in countries with no recent history of conflict, she argued.

“The diversity of societies does not in itself cause conflicts,” Pozuelo said, “but tensions can emerge if differences create or reinforce separateness of communities to the point of challenging the cohesion of society.”

Social integration, facilitated by appropriate policies, can mitigate such risks and promote stability of pluralistic and dynamic societies, she said.

Protection of human rights, including minority rights, is inextricably linked to the preservation of peace and stability within and between States, said Pozuelo. Meeting human rights obligations require ensuring the equal treatment of all members of society.



**Astrid Thors,
OSCE High Commissioner
on National Minorities**

High Commissioner Astrid Thors began by reflecting on her time as a parliamentarian both at the national and European levels. She reminded delegates that promoting integration is a key obligation of States, along with promoting good governance and ensuring human rights. “In today’s world you could argue that integration is an essential part of good governance,” Thors said.

However, significant challenges remain in integrating diverse societies, with hate speech a major obstacle. According to the High Commissioner, parliamentarians have a special responsibility to counter and condemn hate speech whenever it occurs. She went on to outline how the HCNM’s Ljubljana guidelines, published last year, “recommend that States adopt policies that respect diversity but at the same time strive to avoid and combat excessive separation between groups. The focus should be on the integration of the society rather than into it.”

Thors stressed that all groups must be involved in this process and that minority rights and self-identification must remain paramount. According to the High Commissioner, there is “no single recipe for a successful integration policy,” but no effective policy is possible without broad consultation.

Of particular concern to the High Commissioner was the “dire situation” of Roma and Sinti throughout the OSCE area. She pointed to the severe political, economic and social

Parliamentary Conference Session Three



Gordana Comic

strife that the exclusion of Roma and Sinti can cause. Effective registration, quality education and political representation were all highlighted as pressing issues.

Thors concluded by saying that conflict prevention remained at the core of the HCNM's mandate and by urging OSCE institutions to work together to avoid "backsliding" in the field of minority rights.

**Gordana Comic,
Rapporteur for the OSCE PA
Committee for Human Rights, Democracy
and Humanitarian Questions**

Third Committee Rapporteur Gordana Comic (Serbia) offered participants "food for thought" on questions of diversity and integration, arguing that for too long many democracies had been "blind" to diversity. Noting that "you can't manage what you don't measure" she probed how societies can measure diversity and from where the obligation to protect minorities stems.

Comic said that "stereotypes, prejudice and bias" are what stop societies from realizing true equality. She urged delegates to work harder on banning the behavior based on these stereotypes and prejudice. She cited the experience of the Roma community as a prime example, saying that these biases originate in the "narcissism of small differences" and that there should be more active campaigning to promote inclusivity.

Comic drew attention to the unequal role played by men and women in society and the gap between rich and poor.



Ranko Krivokapic

Debate

A spirited debate followed, involving 21 Members from 18 countries. A theme of many of the comments was the need for more efforts to tackle discrimination and intolerance. Delegates discussed the importance of integration as a pillar of security. Several speakers focused especially on the needs of labour migrants to feature more prominently in integration efforts, and emphasized some instances where this had failed.

Societal integration can be achieved through increased inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, delegates argued. Some drew attention to the fact that as a community of shared values, the OSCE, with its mechanisms for co-operation in the field of democracy promotion and human rights, is the best avenue to take for successful integration.

Concluding Remarks by President Ranko Krivokapic

In his concluding remarks, President Krivokapic stressed that the three-day conference had been an excellent opportunity to learn from one another and to candidly debate the way forward for the entire OSCE region. He called upon the Assembly to turn the discussion into concrete plans to be implemented by the participating States and internationally.

Briefly outlining goals for the future, the President said: "Parliamentarians are missionaries of values. And, as one of you put it yesterday, we are doomed to success. This is my firm belief."





Standing Committee Meeting



The Standing Committee consists of the OSCE PA's 57 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, the Autumn Meeting and the Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the PA, approves its budget and appoints the Secretary General.

The OSCE PA's Standing Committee of heads of delegations met on 13 October to discuss ongoing activities of the Assembly, including the recent election observation mission to Azerbaijan. President Krivokapic opened the meeting, mentioning the possibility of expanding election observation.

Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) presented his report, urging parliaments that have not done so to consider hosting future Assembly meetings. Battelli noted that the PA is in good financial health, but for the first time in 20 years, was one per cent over-budget for the fiscal year, partially because interest payments on bank deposits have decreased. He also urged the Standing Committee to consider the possibility that the Assembly is underfunded, noting that it might be necessary for the Assembly to increase its budget in order to maintain its level of activities.

Following the Treasurer's report, Members discussed various ideas for increasing the PA's income, including through extra-budgetary contributions, but no decisions were made.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver reported to the Standing Committee, noting the PA's busy schedule, with upcoming election observation missions to Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. He reported on the activities of the Vienna Liaison Office, where a new employee seconded by the Italian government had just started. The Secretary General informed the Standing Committee of upcoming meetings of the Assembly, including the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki, which will mark the second time that Finland hosts an Annual Session.

Amb. Marcel Pesko, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, presented the OSCE's Unified Budget proposal for 2014, which takes into account the competing interests and priorities of the 57 participating States,

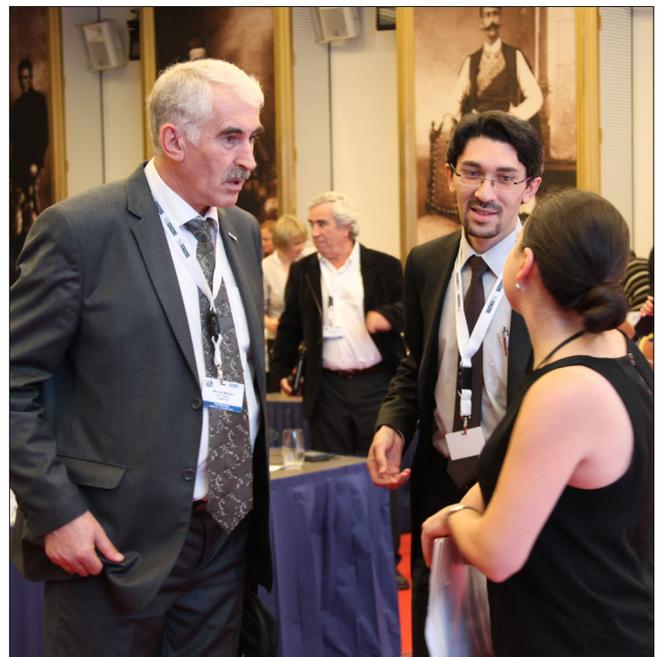
he said. The long-term trend is that the budget is decreasing, he noted, pointing out that there has been no strategic decision to impact the budgetary direction. Rather, the budget reflects the requests of participating States, he said.

The OSCE PA's Special Representative on the OSCE Budget, Petur Blondal (Iceland), asked the ambassador about ways to increase funding in the context of the economic crisis. Treasurer Battelli, who also serves as the OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe, asked about the OSCE's significant financial commitment to the Balkans. OSCE PA Vice-President George Tsereteli (Georgia) inquired about feasibility of the OSCE re-opening a field presence in Georgia, to which the ambassador replied that it would depend on the operation's size.

The Standing Committee then heard reports on election observation missions, Ad Hoc Committees, and Special Representatives. The OSCE Special Co-ordinator for the recent mission to the presidential election in Azerbaijan, Michel Voisin (France), and the head of the OSCE PA delegation, Doris Barnett (Germany) presented their reports, providing for a lively exchange of views that included the participation of Bahar Muradova, head of Azerbaijan's delegation to the PA. Makis Voridis (Greece), who served as deputy head of the PA delegation in Azerbaijan, shared his views on the election at the Bureau meeting the previous day.

Uta Zapf (Germany), outgoing chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, presented her final report to the Assembly, noting that during her time as chair, there has been progress in Belarus in some areas, but mostly regression. She urged the OSCE PA President to appoint a replacement chair for the Working Group as soon as possible.









Secretary General
Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly, and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and has a permanent staff of 17, including three staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.



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Bringing together 323 parliamentarians from across the 57-nation OSCE region, including Europe, Asia and North America, the OSCE PA provides a forum for parliamentary dialogue, leads election observation missions, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, originally established by the 1990 Paris Summit to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, is the oldest continuing OSCE Institution.

The basic objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States;
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly employs a variety of means:

- A Final Declaration and a number of resolutions and recommendations are adopted each year at the Annual Session in July;
- The General Committees address important contemporary international issues;
- Programmes and Seminars designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions to areas of latent or active crisis.



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PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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