

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Mr. Roberto Montella

AUTUMN MEETINGS

SKOPJE, 29 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER 2016

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Report of Roberto Montella,

OSCE PA Secretary General

Standing Committee

Skopje Autumn Meeting, 1 October 2016

While typically a calm period for the Assembly and the International Secretariat, as many parliaments are not in session during the summer, the three months since the Tbilisi Annual Session have continued at a very high pace. In addition to supporting a high-level visit to Turkey following the 15 July attempted coup, the International Secretariat has continued to lay the groundwork not only for upcoming meetings, but also for numerous election observation missions, and targeted activities related to migration as well as other themes. Simultaneously, our internal focus related to reforming the Secretariat's functioning has turned to financial matters.

I appreciate the Assembly's approval of our budget in Tbilisi, enabling us to continue our work in support of Assembly Members. My particular thanks go to the Parliament of Georgia, whose extraordinary hospitality resulted in a very successful Annual Session in which the Assembly engaged on many topical issues. With our meeting in Skopje, I want to extend our sincere thanks to our hosts – both parliamentarians and staff – who have been working tirelessly to deliver such good results.

Strengthening of the International Secretariat (internal reform)

My priority during these first months of my mandate as Secretary General is to work on a general institutionalization of our International Secretariat.

As reported in Tbilisi, together with the management team of the OSCE PA, we have focused during the first six months of my tenure on the elaboration of Staff Rules and Regulations and a Code of Conduct for OSCE PA employees. These new rules have been in place since June, and they now govern the professional relationship of the employees with the Secretariat and Assembly and bring our International Secretariat closer to the way the OSCE and other parliamentary assemblies operate. With the adoption of the budget in Tbilisi, we have financial stability for the coming year, and we can now turn our attention to the **second phase of the internal reform focusing on administrative and financial matters**.

It is my intention to **modernize and potentially restructure the budget** to better reflect the activities of the organization and its financial needs. The OSCE PA International Secretariat has successfully presented for years an image of sound financial management history. However, some changes in the budgetary structure and the accounting practices are necessary in order to further increase our financial accountability vis-à-vis the OSCE PA leadership, increase transparency in line with modern internationally recognized standards, and most importantly, help the International Secretariat enhance the efficiency of its resource management. This reform process is being done in close consultation with our Treasurer and the Assembly leadership, and will be subject to the normal approval process (including requesting support by the Assembly Bureau in April 2017, and by the Standing Committee in July 2017). Further information regarding these changes will of course be provided in due time, but I take this opportunity to preliminarily inform the Standing Committee that we expect certain adjustments to the format of the next proposed budget.

Simultaneously with the expected structural changes to the Assembly's budget, it is our intention to move forward with the **preparation of Financial Rules and Regulations governing our internal financial management**, similar to other parliamentary organizations. This document, for which I would anticipate seeking endorsement by the Standing Committee, will ensure clearer procedures and responsibilities, providing financial safety and security to all OSCE PA stakeholders.

To assist the Secretariat work in instituting these changes, while also maintaining our regular activities, we have hired a Finance Officer on a consultancy basis. Mr. Predrag Radjenovic just joined our Secretariat on 12 September.

Another priority of mine has also been to enable the Secretariat staff to participate in training courses organized by the OSCE, thus improving co-ordination with other parts of the OSCE, as well as improve our ability to provide services to our Members of Parliaments. At the time of writing this report, two-thirds of our staff has already undergone a training activity. We will further explore possibilities to enhance the capability and professional growth of our staff in the months to come.

Co-operation with Partners (external outreach)

This summer has seen further results from our ongoing efforts to **build bridges with partners**, both within the OSCE and with other organizations. Most notably, we were pleased with our **close co-ordination within the OSCE** related to the President's visit to Turkey. This was the first high-level visit to Ankara and Istanbul dedicated to following up on the attempted coup and its aftermath, and was led by President Muttonen, together with Vice-Presidents Guliyev and Santos and Third Committee Chair Sanchez Amor. The participation in the visit of the Director of the OSCE Secretary General's Office, as well as our active outreach to other OSCE Institutions in advance, meant that the delegation could deliver a well co-ordinated message. I believe that this is a precedent to follow, and we will continue to welcome participation by OSCE officials in PA activities when appropriate.

These efforts at better co-ordination are not an end in themselves, but they are intended to ensure that we can better achieve the results we are looking for, and ensuring that the OSCE can truly deliver concrete results to the best of its abilities.

Extending beyond the confines of the OSCE, the International Secretariat also hosted an important retreat in Helsingor, north of Copenhagen, last August focused on **election observation**. Meeting with our traditional partners - the ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and NATO and the European Parliament – we took the time to discuss all aspects of election observation activities. The objective of this exercise was to ensure that in the future we focus more on how to deliver an excellent product to our stakeholders (the citizens and the democratic institutions of the OSCE participating States) and less on the institutional visibility and positioning of our respective institutions. I am convinced that if we do a very good job in election observation and deliver good statements and sound recommendations, we will all benefit in terms of visibility and recognition. This informal brainstorming exercise in Helsingor enabled us to collectively examine issues related to internal procedures, timelines, parliamentary briefings, work prior to and after an election, presentation of results, and a number of other aspects. This resulted in an improved working understanding, and plans for certain concrete adjustments in our work that should provide better service during our election observation work.

In addition, our communications team visited Strasbourg in August to meet with colleagues from the Council of Europe and NATO parliamentary assemblies, improving our co-operation and interoperability also in the communications field.

Activities of the International Secretariat in support of Members

Secretariat staff have maintained a high pace in supporting and preparing for work by OSCE parliamentarians.

President Muttonen has maintained a busy schedule, and on her behalf we facilitated at short notice the **Assembly's high-level visit to Turkey in mid-August**. In addition, we have provided support for her participation in an informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers, the **European Conference of Presidents**

of Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, as well as the **OSCE/ODIHR's Human Dimension Implementation meeting in Warsaw**. We were pleased that the President was able to **visit our headquarters in Copenhagen** in early September, to continue preparation for her many activities.

In the past month, we have supported work by Vice-President Santos, Treasurer Barnett and Third Committee Rapporteur Hadjiyanni at a **major anti-Gypsyism event in Berlin**. Programme Officer Daftary also travelled to **Sicily to support our Migration Committee's visit** there, where we deployed nine parliamentarians, led by Chairman Lombardi and Vice-Chair Picchi, to personally witness the difficulties faced on the ground. Unfortunately, due to circumstances on the ground, a visit by the Migration Committee to hotspots in Greece has had to be postponed; nonetheless, this planned visit was also an excellent example of our co-operation within the OSCE, as it was to be conducted together with the OSCE's Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Amb. Jarbussynova.

The busy **election observation schedule** for this autumn has continued to occupy our time, with Secretariat staff having been or to be deployed to Belarus, Russia, Georgia, Montenegro, Moldova and the United States over the course of two months. Two observation missions have been successfully completed, with strong leadership by **Kent Harstedt and Ivana Dobesova in Belarus, and Ilkka Kanerva and Marietta Tidei in Russia**.

Within the Secretariat, we have also continued to support other ongoing work of the Assembly, including related to the **Assembly's rules of procedure and working practices**. As the Assembly sub-committee examining these matters, **under the leadership of Lord Bowness** moves forward with its work, we continue to encourage Members of the Assembly to give due consideration to any reforms that they would envisage for improving the work of the PA.

Upcoming Events

As noted above, numerous election observation missions are foreseen in the coming months. Most immediately, Ignacio Sanchez Amor and Guglielmo Picchi will lead our teams in **Georgia** on 8 October and just concluded a three days pre-election assessment visit to Tbilisi last week. Margareta Cederfelt and Azay Guliyev will lead the observer teams in **Montenegro** on 16 October, and Arta Dade and Geir Joergen Bekkevold will do so for the presidential election in **Moldova** on 30 October. Following that, President Muttonen and Makis Voridis will lead our efforts for the 8 November elections in the **United States**. In addition, following a political agreement among parties here in **Skopje**, Roberto Battelli and Azay Guliyev will now be able to lead the previously planned mission to elections here, which will now be held on 11 December.

In conjunction with the **OSCE's Ministerial Council** meeting in December, the OSCE PA Bureau will convene on 7 December in **Hamburg**. We also look forward to supporting the Assembly's annual Winter Meeting in Vienna on 23 and 24 February, as preparations move forward for our Annual Session in Minsk in early July.

I would like to conclude by thanking all the members who have written or approached me during these past months with words of advice, encouragement and support. I deeply appreciate the interaction with members of parliament and will further welcome and encourage all the opportunities to interact, also informally, as this (informality) is as you have probably seen by now, mostly my style of work, in order to receive advice, suggestions and why not, also constructive criticism when necessary, in order to always improve the services we deliver to our leadership and our members.

Thank you.

Annex I

List of Meetings/Interlocutors from 5 July to 29 September 2016

OSCE Representatives

OSCE Secretariat

Ambassador Paul Bekkers, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General

ODIHR

Michael Georg Link, Director

HCNM

Henrik Villadsen, Director

OSCE PA Delegations

Delegation of Austria

Christine Muttonen, Deputy Head of Delegation, OSCE PA President

Delegation of Azerbaijan

Azay Guliyev, Member of Delegation, OSCE PA Vice-President

Delegation of Finland

Ilkka Kanerva, Member of Delegation, OSCE PA President Emeritus

Delegation of Georgia

David Usupashvili, Head of Delegation, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia

George Tsereteli, Member of Delegation

Giorgi Volski, Member of Delegation

Victor Dolidze, Alternate Member of Delegation

Delegation of Greece

Georgios Varemenos, Head of Delegation

Delegation of Italy

Marietta Tidei, Member of Delegation, Rapporteur of the OSCE PA General Committee on Economic Affairs,
Science, Technology and Environment

Guglielmo Picchi, Member of Delegation, Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA Committee for Political affairs and
Security

Delegation of Portugal

Isabel Santos, OSCE PA Vice-President

Delegation of Spain

Jose Ignacio Sanchez Amor, Head of Delegation, Chair of the Committee for Democracy, Human Rights and
Humanitarian Questions, Special Representative on OSCE Border Issues

Delegation of Turkey

Vedat Bilgin, Head of Delegation

International Organizations

European Parliament

Pietro Ducci, Director of the Directorate for Democracy Support in the Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union

NATO Parliamentary Assembly

David Hobbs, NATO PA Secretary General
Ruxandra Popa, NATO PA Deputy Secretary General

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Wojciech Sawicki, Secretary General of PACE
Mario Martins, Director General of the Secretariat of PACE

Diplomatic Corps

Ambassador Ernst-Peter Brezovszky, Ambassador of Austria to Denmark
Ambassador Brigitte Brenner, Head of the EU- and International Services of the Austrian Parliament
Ambassador Leo Peeters, Ambassador of Belgium to Denmark
Uffe Balslev, Head of Department for European Neighbourhood, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ambassador Mehmet Dönmez, Ambassador of Turkey to Denmark

Working Visits

Informal OSCE Ministerial Council

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany
Paolo Gentiloni, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy
Aleksey Y. Meshkov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russia Federation
Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments

Laura Boldrini, President, Chamber of Deputies, Italy
Najib El Khadi, Secretary General, House of Representative, Morocco
Valentina Matvienko, Speaker, Federation Council, Russian Federation
Svetislava Bulajic, Secretary General of the National Assembly, Serbia

Georgia

Giorgi Margvelashvili, President of Georgia
Tamar Zhvania, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission
Irakli Chikovani, Member of Parliament, Treasurer of “Irakli Alasania – Free Democrats”
Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Member of the Political Council of “Democratic Movement – United Georgia”
Giorgi Akhvlediani, Member of the Political Council of “Democratic Movement – United Georgia”
Manana Salukvadze, Member of the Political Council of “Democratic Movement – United Georgia”
Anzor Bitsadze, Member of the Political Council of “Democratic Movement – United Georgia”
Levan Berdzenishvili, Member of Parliament
Tamar Khidasheli, Member of “Usupashvili – Republicans” party
Giga Bokeria, International Secretary of the UNM, Member of the Political Council
Sergo Kapanadze, Member of “United National Movement” party
Giorgi Kandelaki, Member of Parliament
Tinatin Bokuchava, Member of Parliament
Kakha Kaladze, Secretary General of “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” party
Irakli Kobakhidze, Executive Secretary of “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” party

Ambassador Antonio Enrico Bartoli, Ambassador of Italy to Georgia
Ambassador Ian Kelly, Ambassador of the United States of America to Georgia

Turkey

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey
Binali Yıldırım, Prime Minister of Turkey
Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey
İsmail Kahraman, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Chairman of The Republican People's Party
Figen Yüksekdağ, Co-chair of the Peoples' Democratic Party
Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of The Nationalist Movement Party

Other

Larisa Minasyan, Executive Director, Open Society Foundation, Armenia
Eka Gigauri, Transparency International, Georgia
Mikheil Benidze, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, Georgia
Erol Onderoglu, Country Representative for Reporters Without Borders, Turkey
Mustafa Aydın, Rector of Kadir Has University, Turkey
Burcak Unsal, Lawyer, Turkey