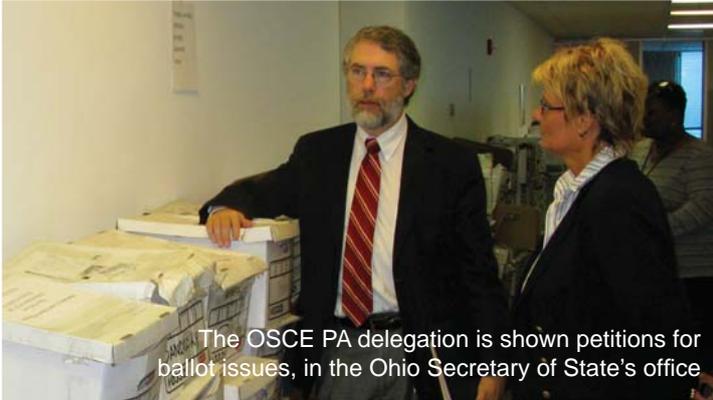


OSCE PA continues its US election observation work



The OSCE PA delegation is shown petitions for ballot issues, in the Ohio Secretary of State's office

OSCE PA President Joao Soares (Portugal) will soon travel across the Atlantic to lead the Parliamentary Assembly's observation mission to the elections in the United States on 4 November.

The mission has a total of 114 participants, with 93 parliamentarians plus delegation secretaries and staff from the International Secretariat in Copenhagen. The parliamentarians represent 31 of the 56 OSCE participating States.

The participants will deploy to nine different states during the final weekend of the election campaign. They are: Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Hampshire, Ohio, Missouri, Colorado and New Mexico.

During the past week, OSCE PA Vice President Pia Christmas-Moeller (Denmark), who will serve as deputy head

of the observation mission, conducted a pre-election visit to the United States, starting in Florida, going on to Columbus, Ohio, and finishing in Colorado. The trip included a visit to the Barack Obama campaign headquarters in Chicago.

In Columbus, the delegation met with the chief of staff in the office of the Secretary of State and with local election officials. In Denver, Colorado, Ms. Christmas-Moeller, who was accompanied on the trip by OSCE PA Director of Communications Klas Bergman and Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker, met with the Secretary of State Mike Coffman and representatives from the political parties. In Boulder, a large university town outside Denver, the delegation spoke to elections officials and observed the centralized area for counting and tabulation of votes.

The participants in the US election observation mission will meet up in Washington at the end of next week for a full day of briefing by US election officials before deployment.

The mission's post-election statement will be made public at a press conference in Washington on 6 November.

The OSCE PA started to prepare for the mission to the United States in August and in September a two-day election seminar was conducted in Washington with almost 50 parliamentarians from 17 countries participating. The preparations have also included intensive research and fact-gathering, including media monitoring.

The OSCE PA observed the 2004 US Presidential election.

Battelli leads OSCE PA field visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The OSCE PA undertook a field visit to the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 19 to 21 October. Under the leadership of Roberto Battelli, Special Representative on South Eastern Europe, the delegation was composed of parliamentarians from different member parliaments of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The purpose of the visit was to observe how the mission deals with OSCE issues in everyday practice. The sample issue chosen for the visit was Human Trafficking. OSCE's Special Representative and Co-ordinator on Human Trafficking, Ms. Eva Biaudet, joined the delegation bringing her expertise and enhancing awareness at the parliamentary level on the role that parliamentarians play in the fight against trafficking.

A central point of the visit was a round table hosted by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina and chaired by Roberto Battelli in the Parliament in Sarajevo. The event was opened by Ilija Filipović, Speaker of the House of Peoples, and was addressed by, among others, Branko Zrno, Head of the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE PA, and Ambassador Vadim Kuznetsov, Acting Head of the OSCE

Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Battelli stated: "Our Missions are, in many ways, the most important aspect of the OSCE. They distinguish this Organization from other international institutions, bringing the OSCE's presence straight to those who are in most need of help. And – after all – our voters want us to check what the executive is doing with public money. So when our colleagues back home ask us why they should allocate money to the OSCE, it is here where we find the arguments."

The delegation also travelled to Mostar to learn about the work undertaken by the NGO "La Strada" in helping victims of trafficking, and it held talks with the representatives of the different entities in the parliament of BiH.



Roberto Battelli speaks to reporters in Sarajevo