

News from Copenhagen

Pia Christmas-Moeller to lead election observation in Tajikistan

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, has appointed OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President Pia Christmas-Moeller Special Co-ordinator for observation of the parliamentary elections in Tajikistan on 28 February. She will also lead the Parliamentary Assembly's delegation of election observers to the Tajik elections.

In the capacity as OSCE Special Co-ordinator, Ms. Christmas-Moeller, Member of Parliament from Denmark, will lead the short-term OSCE observer mission, work closely with the OSCE ODIHR On-site Co-ordinator, and deliver the preliminary post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE at a press conference in the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Monday, 1 March.

"Democratic processes are absolutely vital for Tajikistan to flourish and we look at these elections as an opportunity for progress in the country," said Pia Christmas-Moeller. "My fellow observers and I certainly have an important role to play and we want to wish Tajikistan and its citizens success."

Pia Christmas-Moeller has been a member of the Danish parliament since 1987. An independent member since 2007, she was for many years a member of the Conservative Party, including its political leader from 1998 to 1999, its



Pia Christmas-Moeller observing the 2008 presidential election in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

political spokesperson from 2001 to 2007 and foreign policy spokesperson from 2005 to 2007.

Ms. Christmas-Moeller has headed several OSCE election observation missions in the past, including to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's parliamentary and presidential elections in June 2008 and March 2009. At the U.S. election in 2008, she served as deputy head of mission under President Joao Soares.

The OSCE PA observed the presidential election in Tajikistan in November 2006.

Almost 200 OSCE short term observers, including over 40 OSCE parliamentarians, are expected to participate in the observation mission to Tajikistan at the end of February.

OSCE PA's Winter Meeting to discuss the situation in Afghanistan

A special debate on the situation in Afghanistan will take place at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's ninth Winter Meeting in Vienna 18-19 February. The special debate will start at 13:30 on the second day of the Meeting. Like all sessions during the two-day Meeting, it is open to the media.

Among the speakers on opening day are OSCE PA President Joao Soares, the President of the Austrian Nationalrat Barbara Prammer, and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev. Mr. Saudabayev's speech will be followed by a question and answer session.

Almost 250 OSCE parliamentarians from 53 participating States, as well as parliamentarians from three Mediterranean Partners, are expected to participate in the Winter Meeting, which is the second largest event on the PA's annual calendar after the Annual Session.

OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut will speak and answer questions during the closing session on 19 February. Several heads of OSCE Institutions are also scheduled to speak at the Meeting.

As in previous years, the Winter Meeting will be preceded by a Standing Committee Meeting, starting at 9:30 on 18 February. The three General Committees of the Assembly will meet in special sessions during the two-day conference.

Italian Delegation briefs President Napolitano on Assembly work

Members of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly met with the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, on 15 February at the Quirinal Palace.

The meeting was attended by Senators Laura Allegrini, Luigi Compagna, Andrea Marcucci and Carlo Vizzini, and by Deputies Riccardo Migliori, Claudio D'Amico, Pierluigi Mantini, Guglielmo Picchi and Matteo Mecacci, who serves as Rapporteur of the Assembly's Third Committee.

Mr. Migliori, who serves as Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA, briefed the President on the work of the OSCE PA, focusing in particular on the last Annual Session in Vilnius, and on the Italian Delegation's participation in election observation activities. Mr. Migliori emphasized the important role of parliamentary diplomacy and the positive spirit of constructive cross-party co-operation between the members of the Delegation.

The parliamentarians also emphasized the importance of the OSCE in matters of conflict prevention, economic co-operation, and the safeguarding of human rights and democracy.

Specific reference was also made to combating transnational organized crime, an issue with which the OSCE PA will be particularly engaged during the course of 2010.