

Air traffic problems frustrate Assembly activities

The air traffic problems over Europe have negatively affected various recent activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its Members.

Over the past weekend, the Assembly's regular Bureau Meeting, which was to be held on 19 April in Copenhagen, was cancelled as very few Bureau Members were able to travel to Copenhagen as a result of the continuing air traffic problems.

In a letter sent out over the weekend to all scheduled participants, President Joao Soares announced that "given the travel difficulties caused by the recent volcano in Iceland and uncertainty regarding our abilities to travel to Copenhagen to convene our meeting on Monday, 19 April, I have had to cancel our planned meeting of the Bureau."

"I am sure," Mr. Soares continued, "that we had all been looking forward to a thorough discussion on the various agenda items, but current circumstances make this impractical. I am confident that in the coming weeks we can achieve the needed substance of our meeting by mail and by telephone."

In his letter, President Soares said that it was "with deep regret" that he had to take this decision and he extended his "sincere thanks to the Danish Parliament for their efforts" to prepare this meeting. The Copenhagen Bureau Meeting is usually held every spring.

The draft budget prepared by Treasurer Roberto Battelli

has been circulated to all Bureau Members, and Mr. Battelli has asked for comments to the draft by 22 April. Likewise, consultations continue on the draft Reports and Resolutions that have been prepared by the Rapporteurs of the Assembly's three General Committees for the upcoming Annual Session in Oslo. Drafts will be circulated as soon as final agreement has been achieved.

Final deadlines for the Annual Session are all in June. The deadline for Supplementary Items is 15 June. For Compromise Draft Resolutions and Amendments to Draft Resolutions, the deadline is 22 June and for Amendments to Supplementary Items, the deadline is 29 June.

The air traffic shutdown over Europe also prevented the Assembly's Special Representative on Migration, Kathleen Ferrier (Netherlands), from addressing the opening of the OSCE Training Seminar on Gender and Migration, held in Helsinki, on 15 April. Ms. Ferrier was to open the two-day seminar, organized by the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Policies, Goran Svilanovic.

The South East Europe Regional Heads of Mission Meeting, which the PA's Special Representative for South East Europe, Roberto Battelli, and Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, head of the Assembly's Liaison Office in Vienna, were planning to attend in Sarajevo on 20 and 21 April, was also cancelled due to the air traffic situation.

OSCE PA Special Envoy holds high-level meetings in Kyrgyzstan

The OSCE PA's Special Envoy to Kyrgyzstan, Adil Akhmetov, accompanied the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, on a visit to Bishkek on 20 April to assess the situation and develop ways of overcoming the political crisis in Kyrgyzstan.

The OSCE delegation met the head of the interim government, Roza Otunbayeva, as well as other leaders of the interim government, political parties, NGOs, parliamentarians, heads of diplomatic missions of OSCE participating States, and the UN and EU representatives.

Mr. Akhmetov reported that the interim government has increasing popular support, including from members of the outgoing parliament and a wide variety of NGOs. He also said that the situation was still tense and that civil order has not been completely restored in some areas.

Mr. Akhmetov was optimistic that the interim government would move quickly to draft a new constitution and electoral law, and hold a referendum in the near future.

A member of the Kazakh Delegation to the OSCE PA, Mr. Akhmetov has been a member of the Kazakh Senate since August 2007. He is Secretary of the Senate Committee for International Relations, Defense and Security.



OSCE Centre in Bishkek Head Amb. Andrew Tesoriere, PA Special Envoy Adil Akhmetov, OSCE CiO Kanat Saudabayev, and OSCE Conflict Prevention Center Director Herbert Salber meeting on 20 April

Over 100 MPs to attend TAPF

A total of 111 parliamentarians are scheduled to attend the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum in the Kazakh city Almaty 14 to 15 May. It is jointly organized by the Parliament of Kazakhstan and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Ninety-nine of the parliamentarians come from 34 OSCE participating States. In addition, 12 parliamentarians from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan, and the European Parliament also intend to participate in the Forum. The theme of the Forum is "The OSCE Eurasian Dimension."