

## Efthymiou stresses Parliamentarians' contribution at Almaty Ministerial



Petros Efthymiou speaks to the press during the Informal Foreign Ministers meeting in Almaty



Petros Efthymiou meets with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, in Almaty

Petros Efthymiou (Greece), the newly elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, underlined the importance of the contribution that OSCE Parliamentarians can play in crisis situations, such as in Kyrgyzstan, in an address to the OSCE Informal Foreign Ministers meeting in Almaty 16-17 July.

“The Corfu Process was an excellent start to bringing relevance back to the OSCE through dialogue. It is very important that focus has rightly moved toward strengthening the Organization’s capacity for early reaction to evolving crisis situations,” President Efthymiou said.

“In the past,” the President said, “the OSCE’s flexibility was its strongest asset, reacting when necessary, adapting as appropriate. But the lack of political will, bureaucracy and unmanageable decision-making processes have stood in the way. We must do better. We have to enhance our political decision-making procedure, at the top level, to increase transparency and accountability, in order to upgrade the level and the efficiency of the every day work of our representatives in Vienna.”

“There is no doubt that the OSCE has accomplished a lot over the years. Yet, we all know there is even more to be done if we wish to make the most of our true capacity. I believe that this is the time for major restructuring, time for re-engineering,” Mr. Efthymiou said, and continued:

“Our meeting in Corfu a year ago was primarily

important, because it put the OSCE once again on the agenda of politicians. The OSCE is fundamentally a political organization, based on political commitments. Without political engagement, the OSCE is therefore bound to lose its way. It is for this reason, that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has in recent years been a consistent and vocal advocate of an OSCE summit.”

In Almaty, the OSCE Foreign Ministers reached consensus on holding a summit with heads of state and government in Kazakhstan’s capital Astana this year. Formal decisions by the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna will need to follow the foreign ministers’ agreement.

President Efthymiou, on his first official trip since being elected OSCE PA President at the Annual Session in Oslo on 10 July, also held a series of bilateral meetings in Almaty, meeting with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhshtan’s Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, as well as with the incoming Chairperson-in-Office, Lithuania’s Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, and Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker from the International Secretariat, and Chara Papazoudi from the Greek Parliament, also participated in the Almaty meeting.

Please go to [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org) for the full text of the President’s speech. It can also be viewed at the OSCE’s YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/user/osce](http://www.youtube.com/user/osce).

## Upcoming OSCE PA Election Observation Missions

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly plans to deploy a number of election observation missions in the autumn of 2010. Currently, the International Secretariat is preparing to observe the following elections:

- General elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 October
- Parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, 10 October (date tbc)
- Congressional elections in the USA, 2 November
- Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, 7 November
- Elections in Moldova (date to be determined following a referendum in September)

The International Secretariat is currently working on hotel arrangements and will circulate the usual registration and hotel booking forms as soon as possible.