

News from Copenhagen

Efthymiou promotes re-establishment of OSCE Mission in Georgia



President Efthymiou speaks to reporters in an IDP camp



George Tsereteli, Petros Efthymiou and David Bakradze in front of the Georgian Parliament

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Petros Efthymiou called last week for the re-establishment of the OSCE Mission to Georgia during a visit to Tbilisi. Offering political support for the OSCE presence, he stressed that the mission would be a mechanism not only of investigation but also for confidence-building and conflict prevention.

President Efthymiou also called for continued dialogue within the Geneva Process, recognizing that the Geneva forum, including the UN, EU and OSCE, is the most comprehensive format for discussing the conflicts in Georgia. He promoted the idea of strengthening this format for negotiations.

The visit to Georgia is one of several visits that President Efthymiou has conducted in recent months to countries with protracted conflicts aimed at contributing a parliamentary perspective to the conflict resolution processes.

“Seeing the faces of the internally displaced persons, you realize the scope of the human consequences of the 2008 war,” Mr. Efthymiou said. Mr. Efthymiou discussed the democratic reform processes with representatives of the authorities and members of the opposition inside and outside of the current parliament.

“The upcoming elections in Georgia in 2012 and 2013

present a unique opportunity for this country to show the progress made. We all have to work to improve our democratic standing and promote freedoms in our societies,” Mr. Efthymiou said. “Democracy is defined not only by events on election day; what happens in the entire period between elections is equally important. In this respect, I call on the Georgian authorities to fully investigate the recent events during last month’s demonstration.”

President Efthymiou further welcomed the idea of the Georgian government to set up a working group including opposition parties to discuss electoral reforms. “Reaching a consensus or joint position on fundamental democratic steps and principles would be a very important progress leading up to the coming elections,” he said.

President Efthymiou met with the Speaker of Parliament David Bakradze, President Mikheil Saakashvili, Foreign Minister Gregory Vashadze, the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE PA, members of political parties represented in parliament, opposition figures outside the parliament, and representatives of civil society. He was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen from the Secretariat and Hara Papazoudi from the Hellenic Parliament.

Belgrade Annual Session preparations nearly complete

Preparations for the OSCE PA’s 20th Annual Session, to be held 6-10 July in Belgrade, are nearly final. The deadline for compromise draft resolutions and amendments to resolutions is today, while the deadline for amendments to the Supplementary Items is 29 June.

In addition to the three draft resolutions, which deal with various dimensions of the Session’s theme, “Strengthening the OSCE’s Effectiveness and Efficiency -- A new start after the Astana Summit,” more than 20 supplementary items will be considered in Belgrade. Live streaming of the Annual Session will be accessible from www.oscepa.org.

Members will debate and vote on issues such as

Mediterranean political transition, cyber security, enlarging the partnership with non-member Mediterranean States, combating transnational organized crime, human organ trafficking and trafficking in human beings. All supplementary items are available on the Assembly’s website, along with the reports and draft resolutions of the General Committees.

All meetings of the Annual Session will be held at the Sava Center in Belgrade and are open to the media.

The largest event on the Assembly’s calendar, the Annual Session typically gathers about 250 parliamentarians. The event will conclude with the adoption of the Belgrade Declaration and the election of Assembly Officers on 10 July.

