

News from Copenhagen

Special Representative Vigenin visits the South Caucasus for high-level meetings



Kristian Vigenin meets Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, on 23 May 2016 in Yerevan.



Kristian Vigenin meets Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili, on 25 May 2016 in Tbilisi.



Kristian Vigenin meets the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on 27 May 2016 in Baku.

The OSCE PA's Special Representative on the South Caucasus, Kristian Vigenin (MP, Bulgaria), visited the region last week for high-level meetings in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Addressing the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Vigenin noted the importance of the recent meeting between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and welcomed their agreement to finalize an OSCE investigative mechanism and to expand the OSCE presence in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

Stressing the potential for parliamentary work to encourage political will in negotiating a comprehensive settlement, Vigenin said that he would propose concrete ideas for further engagement at the parliamentary level.

In Armenia, Vigenin held meetings with President Serzh Sargsyan, Vice-President of the National Assembly Eduard Sharmazanov, leaders the Foreign Relations Committee and parliamentary factions, and members of the Armenian delegation to the OSCE PA. Vigenin also reiterated the support

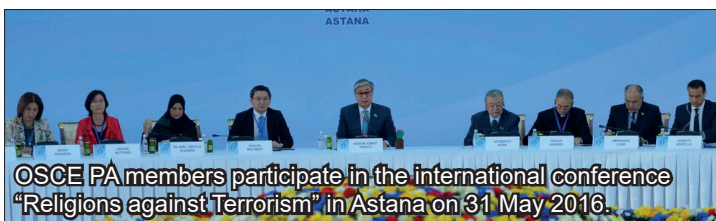
of the Assembly for the work of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

In Azerbaijan, he met with President Ilham Aliyev, Speaker of the Milli Mejlis Ogtay Asadov, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and members of Azerbaijan's OSCE PA delegation.

In Georgia, Vigenin noted that the PA's upcoming Annual Session to be held in Tbilisi on 1-5 July represents an opportune moment for Georgia to demonstrate its achievements in 25 years of independence. He held meetings with President Giorgi Margvelashvili, Chairman of the Georgian Parliament David Usupashvili, and Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze, as well as members of the OSCE PA delegation and representatives of various political forces in the country. Vigenin called on all political forces to act with restraint as October parliamentary elections approach, calling for a thorough investigation into incidents of violence against opposition leaders during recent local elections.

He was accompanied by Andreas Baker from the Secretariat.

Special Representative Muttonen, senior PA Members participate in anti-terrorism conference



OSCE PA members participate in the international conference "Religions against Terrorism" in Astana on 31 May 2016.

OSCE PA Special Representative for Central and Eastern Asia Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) spoke Tuesday at the "Religions against Terrorism" conference in Astana, noting that the OSCE PA has become an important platform for supporting inter-religious dialogue.

Alongside Muttonen, who in her capacity as PA Vice-President and Special Representative was appointed by President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) to represent him at the Astana conference, several other members of the OSCE PA also participated, including OSCE PA Vice-Presidents Kent Harstedt (MP, Sweden), George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia) and Alain Neri (MP, France); Head of the Azerbaijani delegation Bahar Muradova; and Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs Michel Voisin (MP, France); as well as former First Committee Chair Makis Voriadis (MP, Greece).

The event, which featured participation by prominent world leaders and religious figures, culminated in a joint statement that noted "the growing importance and role of inter-religious dialogue, international cooperation, political and inter-parliamentary diplomacy in ensuring the spiritual and legal foundations of global peace and security." A clause welcoming UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 1325, which was put forward by Special Representative Muttonen, was also included in the final document.

PA members, who had been invited by Chairman of the Senate and Head of Kazakhstan's PA Delegation Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, applauded the adoption of the document, noting the importance of expressing unity in countering violent extremism and ensuring that inter-religious dialogue continues.

Muttonen's participation in the conference was part of a broader visit to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan she is undertaking this week with OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and Presidential Advisor Maria Chepurina, and her advisor Lukas Mussi from the Austrian Parliament. She has met with Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov, the Chairmen of the Senate and Mejlis, officials at the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, and representatives of civil society in Almaty.