

## OSCE parliamentarians gather in Skopje for Autumn Meeting

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 15th Autumn Meeting opens in Skopje on Friday with addresses by host officials including the parliament's President, Trajko Veljanoski, and its Vice-President, Renata Deskoska. The opening session will also feature remarks by PA President



Christine Muttonen. Immediately following the opening, there will be a special address by Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, followed by a brief debate.

Some 200 members of parliament from 50 countries will gather from 30 September to 2 October to debate issues under the theme "Strengthening Confidence-Building Measures and Good Governance in the OSCE Region." Topics of discussion will include crises impacting the OSCE area such as migration, the situation in Turkey following the attempted coup of 15 July, the crisis in and around Ukraine, and the progress and ongoing challenges facing South East Europe. The Mediterranean Forum will meet on the opening day under the theme "Promoting Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean," and will be chaired by the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, Michel Voisin.

Session two of the parliamentary conference, taking place

on 1 October, will feature a roundtable event with representatives from all six OSCE field operations in South East Europe, who will discuss issues related to the theme "Developing Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in South East Europe: The Role of the OSCE." The third session

will be held under the theme "Improving Human Rights-Based Governance of International Migration."

Speakers during the three-day meeting will include:

- Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General
- Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden, OSCE Economic and Environmental Coordinator
- Antonijo Miloshoski, Vice-President of the Parliament and Chair of the Foreign Policy Committee
- Oliver Spasovski, Minister of Internal Affairs
- Filippo Lombardi, Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration
- Vladimir Gligorov, Professor at the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies

The meeting will stream live at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org) and can be followed on social media with the hashtag #OSCEPASKopje. Photos will be available on the OSCE PA's Flickr page.

## OSCE PA election observers note improved campaign environment in Georgia



PA delegation meets with ODIHR core team in Tbilisi.

Leading members of the OSCE PA election observation mission to the 8 October parliamentary elections in Georgia conducted a three-day visit to the country last week, noting the active participation of many parties in the campaign.

The delegation included Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain), who has been appointed by OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Frank-Walter Steinmeier as Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission, and Guglielmo Picchi (MP, Italy), who will serve as Head of the OSCE PA observers. Also participating in the Georgia visit last week were PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and Chief of the Executive Office Andreas Baker.

Sanchez Amor and Picchi welcomed the active competition between parties. While most interlocutors noted a polarized

campaign environment, it was reported to be less tense than the previous parliamentary elections. The delegation took note of allegations of instances of intimidation and disruptions to campaigning, and called on all stakeholders to exercise restraint. They encouraged stakeholders to make use of official procedures for complaints and investigation of any campaign incidents.

They welcomed the general confidence in the work of the Central Election Commission, and stressed that observers would be closely monitoring the performance of precinct and district election commissions. The delegation expressed concern that sharp rhetoric by electoral contestants might undermine public confidence in the system.

The delegation met with the President of Georgia, members of the Central Election Commission, and with representatives from major political parties, as well as observers from the OSCE/ODIHR, civil society representatives, and members of the diplomatic community in Tbilisi.

The OSCE PA observation mission will include almost 40 observers from 17 OSCE participating States. The OSCE PA has observed ten elections in Georgia since 1995.