

# News from Copenhagen

## OSCE PA Bureau meets on the eve of 25th Ministerial Council in Milan



George Tsereteli chairs the OSCE PA Bureau meeting in Milan, 5 December 2018.

The OSCE PA's Bureau met Wednesday in Milan ahead of the OSCE's 25th Ministerial Council for discussions on OSCE-related work. Bureau members heard from Assembly President George Tsereteli (Georgia), Treasurer Doris Barnett (Germany), Secretary General Roberto Montella, and Deputy Foreign Minister Guglielmo Picchi, representing the Italian OSCE Chairmanship, who expressed appreciation for the added value of the OSCE's parliamentary dimension.

President Tsereteli opened the meeting with a report on his activities since the OSCE PA's Autumn Meeting in Bishkek, noting his participation in the Eurasian Speakers of Parliament in Antalya, his address to the OSCE Permanent Council, meetings in Bratislava with the incoming Slovakian OSCE Chairmanship, and his leadership of the OSCE's election observation mission to the United States.

Discussion in the Bureau meeting also focused on the escalation of tensions between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in the Kerch Strait, with OSCE PA Second Committee Vice-Chair Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) urging the PA to take a strong stance on the blockading of Ukrainian ships and

the detention of Ukrainian military servicemembers. Bureau members expressed concern over the situation and emphasized the need for restraint.

Treasurer Barnett reported on the financial health of the Assembly, noting that the International Secretariat continues to provide strong financial management and that the Assembly functions efficiently under a limited budget.

Vice-President Peter Bowness, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices, spoke about possible refinements for ensuring that statutory meetings of the Assembly make the most of their time, as well as enhancing the visibility of the PA.

Bureau members discussed proposals to improve election observation procedures introduced by OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna Amb. Andreas Nothelle. The ideas include modifying procedures such as the appointment of observers, the nomination of the leadership of missions, and the drafting of the post-election statement to enhance the credibility of election observation.

SG Montella's report focused on the high level of activities of the Parliamentary Assembly, praising the dedication of PA members. He noted the importance of keeping in mind the effectiveness of the Assembly's work for the citizens of the OSCE area.

Bureau members also heard reports on recent election observation missions and upcoming meetings, including the Winter Meeting on 21-22 February 2019.

President Tsereteli will address the opening of the Ministerial Council on Thursday and has several bilateral meetings scheduled on the margins.

## Voridis visits New York and Washington to strengthen counter-terrorism co-operation

Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) Makis Voridis (Greece) is in the United States this week, visiting UN headquarters on Monday and participating in a briefing at the U.S. Helsinki Commission in Washington on Tuesday.

Voridis met with Vladimir Voronkov, Undersecretary General of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, Chair of the UN's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC); and Michèle Coninsx, Assistant Secretary General and Executive Director of the CTC. The sides explored ways to strengthen the PA's co-operation with the UN on counter-terrorism. Voridis commended the work of the UN and stressed that the OSCE PA is working to leverage its strengths to promote more informed and co-ordinated actions at the parliamentary level.

At Tuesday's briefing in Washington, Voridis was joined by U.S. Congressman and Vice-Chair of the CCT Richard Hudson, who discussed the contribution of the PA in advancing

co-ordination on border control and information sharing. Voridis emphasized the power of 323 parliamentarians asking specific questions of their governments about what they are doing to implement international obligations.

Voridis's programme continues in Washington with meetings with members of the U.S.'s OSCE PA delegation, as well as representatives of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Centre, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and leading experts from civil society.



Makis Voridis and Richard Hudson with representatives of the Port Authority in New York, 3 December 2018.