

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

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Roberto Battelli



Pia Christmas-Moeller



Petros Efthymiou

OSCE PA parliamentarians to lead three election observation missions

OSCE PA President Joao Soares has appointed the leaders of the Parliamentary Assembly's three election observation missions in late March and early April to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, and Moldova.

Danish parliamentarian Pia Christmas-Moeller will head the mission to FYROM on 22 March, Slovenian parliamentarian Roberto Battelli will head the mission to Montenegro on 29 March, while Greek parliamentarian Petros Efthymiou has been appointed to head the mission to Moldova on 5 April. All three are experienced election observers with over 30 missions between them in the last few years.

The OSCE PA observation mission to the parliamentary elections in Moldova will be a full mission with a high number of members of parliament participating, while the missions to

the presidential elections in FYROM and to the parliamentary elections in Montenegro will be limited missions, each consisting of a smaller number of parliamentarians.

"I appreciate the willingness of these three parliamentarians to continue the Parliamentary Assembly's vital work in election observation since 1993," said President Soares upon announcing the appointments. "These elections are important in the continued democratic development of all three countries and it is my hope that they will be both free and fair."

Pia Christmas-Moeller, a Vice President in the OSCE PA, headed the Assembly's observation missions to the parliamentary elections in FYROM last spring; Roberto Battelli is the Assembly's Special Representative on Southeastern Europe; and Petros Efthymiou is Chairman of the Assembly's Second Committee.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly hosts investment seminar in Belarus

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Working Group on Belarus is organizing a seminar next week in the capital Minsk on "Improving the Climate for Foreign Investment."

The seminar is organized with the Belarusian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly in co-operation with Germany's Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation and with the support of the OSCE Office in Minsk.

OSCE PA President Joao Soares, who is to address the seminar, is also scheduled to meet with the governmental and parliamentary leadership of the country as well as with opposition politicians and representatives of civil society.

The seminar, which will take place next Wednesday, 11 March, is expected to have about one hundred participants from Belarus as well as from the OSCE PA, the European Commission, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The topics of the various sessions include promotion of small and medium enterprises, investment cooperation between Belarus and the countries in the European Union, and investment opportunities in Belarus.

The OSCE PA Working Group on Belarus is headed by the German parliamentarian Uta Zapf. Other members are: Claudio D'Amico, Italy; Morten Hoeglund, Norway; Pawel Ponscyjlusz, Poland; Fred Ponsonby, United Kingdom; and Cecilia Wigstrom, Sweden.

PA Vice-President Cardin outlines priorities as Chair of U.S. Helsinki Commission

In resolving conflicts and promoting security across the OSCE area, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is "an extremely valuable institution that brings parliamentarians together," said U.S. Helsinki Commission Chairman Benjamin Cardin in an interview for the OSCE PA's web site.

Parliamentarians "know how to resolve differences," he said, "and I do think we can help prevent conflicts and deal with the frozen conflicts."

The U.S. senator also outlined his priorities as Helsinki Commission Chairman and described the renewed support for the Helsinki process in the new administration of President Barack Obama.

For audio/video of the interview, as well as a full transcript, please visit www.oscepa.org.

OSCE PA Follow-Up Reports available online

The OSCE PA has produced three Follow-Up Reports which provide a general overview of relevant developments by participating States and the OSCE on recommendations found in the OSCE PA's Astana Declaration of July 2008.

The reports, which were presented by the Vice-Chairs of the three General Committees at the Winter Meeting in Vienna, are available in their entirety on the OSCE PA's web site, www.oscepa.org.