

News from Copenhagen

Afghanistan in focus at OSCE PA's Winter Meeting



The OSCE PA holds its annual Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna

A special debate on the situation in Afghanistan will be the main focus at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Winter Meeting being held on 18-19 February in Vienna. The special debate will take place 13:30 on the second day of the meeting.

Among the speakers are the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, OSCE PA President Joao Soares, OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, and several heads of OSCE Institutions.

Around 240 OSCE parliamentarians are expected to participate in the annual Vienna meeting. It is the second largest event on the PA's annual calendar after the Annual Session, which this year will be held in Oslo from 6 to 10 July.

As in previous years, the Winter Meeting will be preceded by a Standing Committee Meeting, starting at 9:30 on 18 February. At the Standing Committee Meeting, Members will discuss Assembly business and will be briefed by President Soares on the OSCE PA's election observation mission to Ukraine.

Beginning with this year's Winter Meeting, the Assembly's International Secretariat will distribute to all delegations electronic documentation folders in PDF format.

The electronic PDF folder will contain all pertinent documents and will be e-mailed prior to the meetings and also available on the Assembly's website. It will be up to each delegation to decide on the printing of the documents and the quantity needed.

This new environmentally friendly procedure is intended to prevent the wasteful use of paper at Assembly meetings, and is in response to the concern of some delegations.

Details on the Winter Meeting agenda, as well as practical and logistical information, are available at www.oscepa.org.

Chairperson-in-Office addresses PA Members in Washington



Former PA President Alcee Hastings chairing the Helsinki Commission hearing

The new Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakh Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, appeared before the U.S. Helsinki Commission on Tuesday in Washington. Former PA President Alcee Hastings said that he hopes the Chairmanship will strengthen the role of parliamentarians in the Organization. PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver also attended the hearing.



Chairperson-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev appears before the Helsinki Commission

Dutch delegation visits International Secretariat

Five members of the Dutch Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly paid a visit to the International Secretariat in Copenhagen on Friday, 29 January.

Led by the Head of the Delegation, Coskun Coruz, the group also included OSCE PA Special Representative on Migration Kathleen Ferrier, Pauline Meurs, Harry van Bommel, and Arjen Westerhoff, Secretary of Delegation.

Topics on the agenda included election monitoring, Ms. Ferrier's work as the OSCE PA's new Special Representative on Migration, and the Assembly's involvement in the "Corfu process."



Left to right: Secretary of Delegation Arjen Westerhoff, Harry van Bommel, Special Representative on Migration Kathleen Ferrier, Head of Delegation Coskun Coruz, OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and Pauline Meurs