

News from Copenhagen

Efthymiou in Vienna to welcome Lithuanian Chairmanship



Petros Efthymiou and Chairman-in-Office Audronius Azubalis



Petros Efthymiou and Head of the OSCE PA's Austrian Delegation Barbara Prammer



Petros Efthymiou and Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger

OSCE PA President Petros Efthymiou was in Vienna last week to participate in the opening of Lithuania's 2011 OSCE Chairmanship and the annual meeting of Heads of Institutions and Field Operations. The President and Secretary General Spencer Oliver were accompanied by several senior representatives of the PA Secretariat including Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen and Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, the Assembly's Special Representative in Vienna.

Mr. Efthymiou and other representatives of the PA took part in the opening meeting of the Permanent Council on 13 January, which was addressed by the new Chairman-in-Office, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis. In his remarks, Mr. Azubalis recalled the importance of implementing commitments: "unless we all act on the recommendations made at Astana, and in the spirit of the Helsinki process, progress toward lasting peace cannot be made."

A former Member of the OSCE PA and Head of the Lithuanian Delegation to the Assembly, the Minister gave particular recognition to the importance of the Assembly. "We must also involve parliamentarians more actively in our work," he said. "Having led the Delegation of the Lithuanian Seimas to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for several years, I am well aware of the potential of this body."

Minister Azubalis introduced the Chairmanship's Work Programme which outlines the priorities for 2011, including contributing to progress in the resolution of protracted conflicts;

enhancing efforts to tackle transnational threats in the OSCE area; advancing freedom of the media; developing common principles in the field of energy security and promoting sub-regional co-operation. Minister Azubalis was accompanied by the Head of the Lithuanian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Vilja Aleknaite-Abramikiene.

President Efthymiou also held individual meetings with Minister Azubalis, as well as with the President of the Austrian Parliament and Head of the Austrian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Barbara Prammer, and with the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael Spindelegger. In all meetings, President Efthymiou encouraged increased openness in OSCE affairs, and particularly called for a transparent process when recruiting the next Secretary General of the OSCE and other senior posts such as the Director of the OSCE/ODIHR. The President reiterated his call for these posts to be filled by individuals with a public profile and high political caliber.

On the sidelines of the the meetings, President Efthymiou met with the heads of several OSCE field presences to explore ways in which OSCE parliamentarians can further support their work.

OSCE PA staff representatives, including Deputy Director for Field Operations Roberto Montella, Deputy Director of Administration Marc Carillet, Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker and Programme Officer Anna Chernova, also participated in various regional working groups on 14 January.

Secretariat moving

Over the next two days, the OSCE PA International Secretariat will be moving to new premises at **Tordenskjoldsgade 1, 1055 Copenhagen K, Denmark.**

All future correspondence should be sent to this new address. Telephone numbers will remain the same, but in case of any problems reaching the Secretariat this week, it is recommended that mobile phone numbers are used.

Deadline reminder

Delegations are kindly reminded that the registration deadline for the Winter Meeting is **Friday 21 January.** Registration forms, as well as draft programmes for the meeting in English, French and Russian, are available at www.oscepa.org.

Completed registration forms should be emailed to odile@oscepa.dk.