

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA Working Group on Belarus meets in Copenhagen

The PA Working Group on Belarus, chaired by German parliamentarian Uta Zapf, held a meeting on 14 June at PA Headquarters in Copenhagen. In addition to Mrs. Zapf, the meeting was attended by Pawel Poncyłjusz (Head of the PA Polish Delegation), Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene (Head of the PA Lithuanian Delegation), and Claudio D'Amico (Italy).

The meeting was organized by Programme Officer Anna Chernova, who regularly supports the activities of the Working Group. Also participating in the meeting were Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker, Communications Director Neil Simon, and Research Assistant Nathan Grison.

Members addressed the difficulties encountered in trying to organize meetings in Belarus in order to continue the dialogue that has taken place over the past several years. Decisions were taken to support the Supplementary Item introduced for consideration at the Annual Session in Belgrade, as well as possible side meetings and a working lunch on the margins of the Annual Session.

Chairperson Zapf reported that she had been denied a visa to attend the trials of demonstrators arrested in the aftermath of the last elections in Belarus. Various propositions and



Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene and Uta Zapf meeting in Copenhagen

suggestions were made as to how the Working Group and the Parliamentary Assembly can support those in jail as well as individuals and groups in Belarus who are seeking to do the same.

The Supplementary Item introduced by Ms. Zapf with more than 50 co-sponsors aims to “renew dialogue” with Minsk and calls on Belarus to: release political prisoners detained in connection with the December demonstrations; allow independent experts appointed under the Moscow Mechanism into the country; and develop a media law in line with the country’s international commitments. Members also discussed environmental issues, including a planned nuclear plant in Belarus near the Lithuanian border.

OSCE Parliamentarians observe elections in Turkey



Pia Christmas-Moeller, with Secretary General Spencer Oliver, inspects a ballot prior to the vote in Ankara.

After a decision by Parliamentary Assembly President Petros Efthymiou, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly deployed a full election observation mission to observe the elections in Turkey, despite the decision by the OSCE ODIHR to send only a limited assessment team.

President Efthymiou appointed OSCE PA Vice-President Pia Christmas-Moeller to lead the observation mission, which included Vice-Presidents Aleksander Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation), Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria) and Riccardo Migliori (Italy). The delegation also included Bureau Members Tonino Picula (Croatia) and Matteo Mecacci (Italy), as well as Heads of Delegation Coskun Coruz (Netherlands) and Michel Voisin (France). The observation, bringing together more than 70 observers, including 61 Members of Parliaments from 30 countries, was a joint effort of delegations from the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The OSCE ODIHR lim-



Pia Christmas-Moeller, with Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhayev, examines a voters list

ited assessment team, led by former OSCE PA Vice-President Tana De Zulueta, assisted in briefings held in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Diyarbakir.

The mission was supported by Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhayev, Deputy Director for Field Operations Roberto Montella, Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Special Representative Andreas Nothelle, Programme Officer Anna Chernova, Communications Director Neil Simon, and Research Assistants Nigar Rasulova, Jana Fikri and Kamiel Mesie.

Deadlines reminder

Please note the following deadlines for the 20th Annual Session, to be held in Belgrade on 6-10 July:

- Amendments to the three General Committee Draft Resolutions: **22 June**
- Amendments to Supplementary Items: **29 June**