

News from Copenhagen

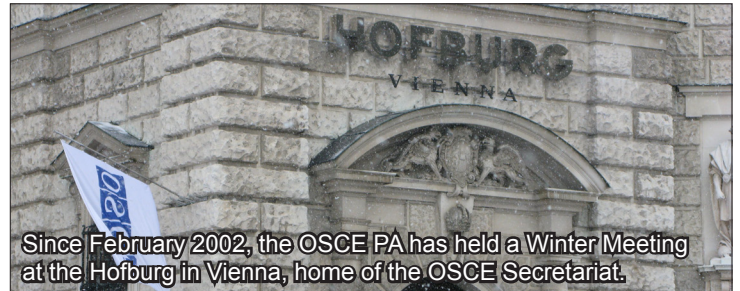
OSCE Parliamentarians gather in Vienna for 2012 Winter Meeting

Approximately 250 parliamentarians from more than 50 countries are expected to participate in the OSCE PA's 11th Winter Meeting, being held 23-24 February in Vienna. The meeting commences Thursday morning with an international panel addressing the Assembly's human rights committee about torture, prisons and justice.

The global financial crisis and its impact on the OSCE area will be debated in the Assembly's economic committee with presentations from Amb. Eustathios Lozos, Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee and Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE, and Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

In the committee on political and military affairs, parliamentarians will discuss the fight against terrorism and crime with briefings by UN and OSCE officials including Amb. Tacan Ildem, Chair of the OSCE Security Committee and Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE. On Friday, a special debate on conventional arms control in Europe is expected to include participation from leading experts from the United States and the Russian Federation.

Also scheduled to address the Winter Meeting are OSCE



Since February 2002, the OSCE PA has held a Winter Meeting at the Hofburg in Vienna, home of the OSCE Secretariat.

PA President Petros Efthymiou; President of the Austrian Parliament Barbara Prammer; Ireland's Minister of State for European Affairs Lucinda Creighton as Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office; OSCE Secretary General, Amb. Lamberto Zannier; OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Amb. Knut Vollebaek; Director of the OSCE/ODIHR, Amb. Janez Lenarcic, and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatovic. OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry will present a report on gender, followed by a discussion.

Winter Meeting sessions are open to the media and will be broadcast live online at www.oscepa.org. The full agenda and speeches will also be available online.

In Cyprus visit, Efthymiou urges security based on trust

In a series of high-level meetings last week in Cyprus, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Petros Efthymiou stressed the unique role of the OSCE as a security organization with Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian dimensions. He emphasized in particular the potential of the parliamentary dimension to substantially contribute to the fulfillment of OSCE commitments.

"Parliamentary diplomacy is vital in the forging of solid relationships built on foundations of trust, which is key to building a more secure Mediterranean region," Efthymiou said.

Efthymiou visited Cyprus at the invitation of the President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Yiannakis Omirou. In addition to meeting with House

President Omirou, meetings were held with the President of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Christofias, Foreign Minister Erato Kozakou-Markoulis, Minister of Education and Culture Giorgos Dimosthenous, the Chairman of the House Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs Averof Neofytou, as well as the members of the Cypriot Delegation to the OSCE PA.

In light of recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa, President Efthymiou's meetings included full exchanges of views on possible ways to enhance the input of the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly to promote stability and security in the region.

Efthymiou also discussed Cyprus' upcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union, which begins in July 2012, noting that Cyprus has set solid foundations for its goals.



Meeting with Demetris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus.



With George Demosthenous, Minister for Education of Cyprus.



With Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.