

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

Number 425 Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

14 March 2012

OSCE Chair-in-Office Gilmore visits International Secretariat



Spencer Oliver giving a tour of the Secretariat.



Eamon Gilmore, with Brendan Scannell (left), meet with Spencer Oliver and staff.



Eamon Gilmore in a meeting with Spencer Oliver, Tina Schoen and Gustavo Pallares.

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Eamon Gilmore, visited the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat on 9 March and expressed his support for parliamentarians being more closely involved in the comprehensive work of the OSCE.

Ireland's Ambassador to Denmark Brendan Scannell accompanied Gilmore in his meetings with OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretaries General Tina Schoen and Gustavo Pallares, and later the full staff of the Secretariat.

"I am delighted to visit the headquarters of the Parliamentary Assembly in Copenhagen and to meet the staff who have dedicated themselves to the noble goals of the OSCE," said Gilmore.

In an interview posted at www.oscepa.org, Gilmore highlighted the work of OSCE parliamentarians, saying, "The Parliamentary Assembly has a key role to play in the overall work of the OSCE. The Parliamentary Assembly is the body that brings together the elected representatives of the people of the 56 participating States."

"I want to work closely with the Parliamentary Assembly in progressing the work of the OSCE and in particular progress-

ing the work of the Irish Chairmanship this year," he said.

Dublin will host a conference on 27 April dedicated to sustainable peace initiatives, using the Northern Ireland peace process as a case study with lessons for other OSCE countries in conflict. The OSCE PA Special Representative on the South Caucasus, President Emeritus Joao Soares, is expected to attend the Dublin conference. Gilmore also informed the Secretariat of an upcoming June conference in Dublin on internet freedom.

"As an elected parliamentarian himself, Minister Gilmore has invaluable experience in working with politicians who constitute the very foundation of democratic countries in the OSCE, and he understands the many diverse challenges facing the region today," said Oliver.

The Assembly expressed its full support for the 2012 Irish Chairmanship agenda at a meeting in Dublin 1 February, when Gilmore hosted OSCE PA President Petros Efthymiou, Soares, and Oliver.

Members of the Parliamentary Assembly have passed several resolutions in the last two years aimed at promoting dialogue to resolve conflicts, increasing the free flow of information online, and combating hate crimes, all Chairmanship priorities.

Belarusian Ambassador discusses human rights with SG Oliver

The Ambassador of Belarus to Denmark, Andrei M. Grinkevich, visited the International Secretariat on 8 March to meet with OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver.

The discussion focused on the human rights situation in the country, including the trials following the December 2010 presidential election. The Secretary General also raised the issue of the current prison conditions of former presidential candidate Andrei Sannikov.

The discussion comes just two weeks after the Assembly's General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions heard a presentation by Sannikov's sister at the PA's Winter Meeting in Vienna.

Oliver urged the authorities in Minsk to invite the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus to visit Minsk, in order to meet with a wide range of interlocutors. He also expressed concern regarding the upcoming parliamentary elections in Belarus, and noted the Belarusian government's standing commitment to invite OSCE observers. Oliver added that the PA expects an invitation to be forthcoming to these elections.

Ambassador Grinkevich noted that his government stands ready for a constructive dialogue with the OSCE PA.

Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen and Programme Director Anna Chernova also participated in the meeting.