

News from Copenhagen

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly gearing up for a busy spring

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is preparing for a busy spring, starting with the meeting of the Bureau in Copenhagen later this month.

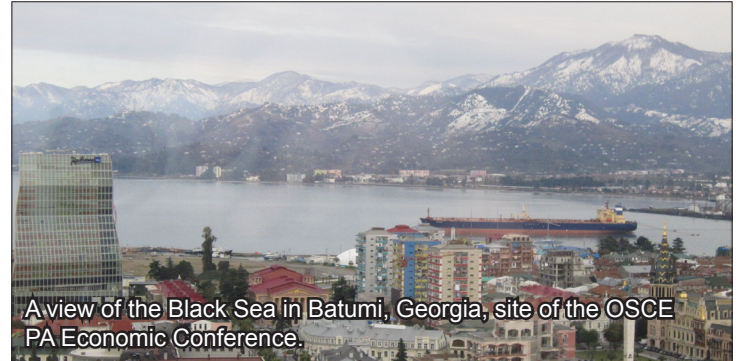
Chaired by President Petros Efthymiou, the Bureau will meet on Monday 23 April. In preparation of the Annual Session to be held in Monaco in July, the Bureau will examine the preliminary reports and draft resolutions presented by the rapporteurs of the three general committees. Other issues will include the reports of the president, the secretary general and the treasurer, who will propose his draft budget for the coming financial year.

A representative of the Irish OSCE Chairmanship is also expected to address the Assembly's Bureau Members. The President of the National Council of Monaco Jean-Francois Robillon will also be present.

Bureau Members will discuss upcoming Assembly meetings for 2012, including the Economic Conference in Batumi, Georgia, the Annual Session in Monaco and the Fall Meetings in Tirana.

Following the Bureau Meeting, the OSCE PA will be conducting two election observation missions, one to Armenia and one to Serbia. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Irish Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore, has appointed François-Xavier De Donnea of Belgium and Matteo Mecacci of Italy to serve as special co-ordinators to lead the OSCE election observation missions to the 6 May elections in Armenia and Serbia, respectively.

Around 60 parliamentarians are currently registered to observe the Armenian elections and approximately 35 signed



up for the Serbian election observation mission.

Mecacci is conducting a two-day pre-election visit this week in Belgrade. He has met with Speaker of Parliament Slavica Djukic Dejanovic, who is currently the acting president of Serbia in the wake of President Tadic's resignation. Mecacci will also meet with government officials, political party leaders and representatives of civil society.

After the Armenian and Serbian election observation missions, the OSCE PA will be gathering from 12 to 14 May in Batumi, Georgia, for the Assembly's Economic Conference, hosted by the Parliament of Georgia. Entitled "Fostering Economic Co-operation and Stability in the OSCE Region," the conference will focus on modern economic problems, energy security, and best practices in regional co-operation.

"The high level of engagement in Assembly activities this spring shows the enthusiasm of our Members, and demonstrates their commitment to the values of the Organization as a whole," said OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver.

International Secretariat welcomes new team of research fellows

The OSCE PA International Secretariat is joined this spring by four new research fellows: Darío Sánchez Andrés from Spain, Xenia Beck from Germany, Matteo De Donà from Italy, and Wesli Turner from the United States. They join research fellow Loic Poulain from France, who has been at the Secretariat since October.

With a wide range of professional skills, educational backgrounds and language proficiency in Russian, German, French, Polish, Spanish, Italian and English, the new team of fellows brings invaluable support to the Assembly.

Sánchez has degrees in law and political science from the University of Madrid and has also studied at the Institute of Political Studies of Bordeaux. Beck holds a dual Master's Degree from the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po Paris) and the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO) in International Security and International Public Management.

De Donà has a Master's Degree in International Relations

and Diplomacy from the University of Trieste. He has held previous internships at the Secretariat of the Council of the European Union and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Having just completed a five-month research fellowship at the Caucasus Research Resource Centers in Tbilisi, Georgia, Turner holds a Master's Degree in Human Rights and International Politics from the University of Glasgow and a Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia. She has written several articles on the South Caucasus for the journal *Social Sciences in the Caucasus*.

"We are very fortunate to be joined by such bright and talented young people," said Secretary General Spencer Oliver. "The knowledge, the research skills, the language abilities and the energy that these research fellows bring to the Secretariat are essential for the work that we do."

Since 1995, more than 200 fellows from 29 countries have participated in the research fellowship programme.