

# News from Copenhagen

## PA Human Rights Chair addresses Vienna counterpart committee

Matteo Mecacci (Italy), Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, addressed the Human Dimension Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council on 11 June. It was the second time in seven months that Mecacci participated in a meeting of the PA's counterpart committee in Vienna.

Mecacci sparked a lively debate by asking the committee how the OSCE can maintain relevance if it fails to take decisive action when specific crises emerge. Eight speakers took the floor, including the representative of the European Union, to address the question. Mecacci also reiterated the Assembly's call for utilizing the OSCE's "Moscow mechanism," which provides tools for swift action to be taken on urgent human dimension matters.

Swiss Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, praised the close co-operation that has developed between the two committees of the PA and the PC. Specifically mentioning the Belgrade Annual Session Declaration and the PA's resolution on the PC's Human Dimension Committee, Greminger welcomed these calls for closer co-operation between the PA and the OSCE's executive structures.

Mecacci urged improved procedures for follow-up on human dimension issues and suggested that the PC follow the PA's example by looking into concrete individual cases and countries. Referring to the debate on prisons and the judiciary held at the PA's last Winter Meeting in Vienna, he underlined that it demonstrated challenges not only in countries of transition, but also in so-called established democracies.



Thomas Greminger, Matteo Mecacci and Andreas Nothelle

"This is why we looked at examples from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, but also from Italy," said Mecacci. In this context, he questioned whether it makes sense for the OSCE to hold its most significant event on the implementation of Human Dimension commitments – the annual HDIM – in Warsaw rather than Vienna, the seat of the governmental delegations and the OSCE Secretariat.

He also recommended that the ambassadors take a close look at the many draft resolutions proposed for the upcoming Annual Session of the PA in Monaco.

Greminger concluded by taking up a Swiss proposal to put the PA's resolutions in the Human Dimension on the agenda of his committee, following their adoption by the Assembly.

During his visit to Vienna, Mecacci was supported by OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle and the Vienna Liaison Office.

## PA on pre-election visit to Georgia

OSCE PA Deputy Director for Field Operations Roberto Montella is on a pre-electoral Needs Assessment Mission to Georgia this week, organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The NAM is being conducted in preparation for the Georgian parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2012, and is meeting with a variety of interlocutors in Tbilisi.

Members of the NAM are discussing the pre-election environment with election officials, representatives of political parties, members of the legal community, media representatives and civil society.

Last month, in connection with the OSCE PA's Economic Conference in Batumi, Assembly President Petros Efthymiou (Greece) met with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, who urged the OSCE PA to send a robust delegation of election observers.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has observed elections in Georgia in 2008, 2004, 2003, 1999 and 1995.

## OSCE PA social media project

**sOcialSCAPE**

Considering the growth in online communications, turning tools like Facebook and Twitter into mainstream policy communication channels, the International Secretariat is collecting stories of how parliaments, governments, NGOs, and ordinary citizens are using online strategies to engage people and promote change in the OSCE area.

A collection of social media case studies will be distributed at the 21st Annual Session, to be held in Monaco on 5-9 July 2012. The project is intended to help strengthen relationships between citizens and their elected representatives, as well as build bridges between nations across the OSCE area.

Any delegations that wish to highlight cases within their countries can submit their stories through [oscepa.org](http://oscepa.org), by clicking on the sOcialSCAPE icon.