

News from Copenhagen

Nothelle represents PA at Helsinki +40 ambassadorial meeting

OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle represented the PA at the first meeting of the ambassadorial working group on the Helsinki +40 Process on 12 February. During the three-hour meeting, many ambassadors explained their expectations regarding the envisaged three-year process, with one of the issues discussed being the role of input by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The Ukrainian Chairmanship announced that it would invite Amb. Nothelle to participate in the meetings, and would appreciate written submissions by the OSCE PA on any issues of concern to the Assembly.

Amb. Nothelle referred to the extended mandate of the

PA's Committee on Transparency and Accountability and the resolution on Helsinki +40 that had been adopted in Monaco, which urged OSCE participating States to use the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act "as an occasion to renew the vision and the role of the OSCE in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security architecture."

Amb. Nothelle also discussed the initiative of the three PA delegations of Serbia, Switzerland, and Ukraine as well as the focus that will be placed on this issue at the OSCE PA's Annual Session that will take place later this year. The theme of the Annual Session, to be held in Istanbul from 29 June to 3 July, is "Helsinki +40."

French ambassador visits OSCE PA International Secretariat

Veronique Bujon-Barre, the French Ambassador to Denmark, visited the OSCE PA International Secretariat and met with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares on 13 February. Discussions focused on the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly and general issues of relevance to the OSCE, including protracted conflicts. Oliver briefed the ambassador on the Assembly's ongoing work, in particular in the field of election observation, including the mission to Armenia which is currently underway.

Amb. Bujon-Barre was given a tour of the attractive and highly functional PA headquarters provided by the Danish



parliament and noted the Danish government's generosity in hosting the Assembly. She was also introduced to the current team of research fellows from Italy, Russia, the United States, France and Luxembourg.

OSCE PA working lunches greet new OSCE ambassadors in Vienna

Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, Special Representative of the OSCE PA in Vienna, last week hosted a working lunch for the newly arrived ambassadors from Slovakia and Bulgaria to the OSCE, Olga Algayerova and Svetoslav Spassov, respectively, as well as with Ambassador Mohamed Benhocine of Algeria. The working lunch on 6 February dealt with the Assembly's preparations for the Winter Meeting and a number of general issues relevant to the OSCE PA.

The discussions touched on issues of energy security – one of priorities of the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship – which Amb. Algayerova, as the new Chair of the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Committee, has a keen interest in. Amb. Algayerova will address parliamentarians at the Second Committee during the PA's Winter Meeting next week.

Amb. Spassov contributed his extensive experience as a former member of the Bulgarian Parliament to the discussion and Amb. Benhocine reiterated his country's significant interest in the OSCE and announced that Algeria will again be represented by a high-level parliamentary delegation at the Winter Meeting. He also briefed his colleagues about the terrorist attack on In Amenas gas field and Algeria's ongoing co-operation with the OSCE.

Over the years, these working lunches have developed into a positive and well-accepted tradition and a valuable means of acquainting them with the work of the PA at an early stage of their presence in Vienna. They are part of the Special Representative's efforts to provide ambassadors with the parliamentary perspective on a variety of issues. The next working lunch will be held next week.

Updated report on Syrian refugee crisis

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver this week issued an updated report on the humanitarian crisis in Syria and its impact on the OSCE region. The report is published in advance of a special debate to be held on the topic at the Winter Meeting in Vienna on 22 February.

Following an initial release in November, information has been updated in the report, providing new facts and figures and detailing the international response to the crisis. "This updated report demonstrates that the consequences of the conflict in Syria affect the whole of the OSCE region," said Oliver.

The report is available at www.oscepa.org.