

## President Grossruck in Kazakhstan for economic summit, meetings



President Grossruck meets Speaker of the Senate Kairat Mami.



Speaker Mami meeting with President Grossruck.

OSCE PA President Wolfgang Grossruck is in Kazakhstan this week for a round of high-level meetings before participating in the Astana Economic Summit Thursday.

Meeting Monday with Speaker of the Senate Kairat Mami and Speaker of the Mazhilis Nurlan Nigmatulin, Grossruck encouraged the full participation of the Kazakhstani delegation to the OSCE PA at the upcoming Annual Session in Istanbul and stressed the importance of speakers of parliament attending such events to strengthen inter-parliamentary dialogue.

The Kazakhstani speakers raised the importance of stability in Afghanistan as a key issue within OSCE region. The draft resolution of the OSCE PA Committee on Political Affairs

and Security calls for deepening OSCE co-operation with Afghanistan to address security challenges. Members will debate and vote on the resolution in Istanbul next month.

In Astana, Grossruck also met with Kazakhstani members of the PA, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Volkov and Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana, Amb. Natalia Zarudna. In his meetings, Grossruck underlined the importance of the work of the OSCE Centre in Astana, and expressed his support for plans to establish an OSCE police training centre and OSCE-linked academic institution on Helsinki +40 issues in Almaty. He also underlined his appreciation for the active role of Kazakhstan's OSCE PA delegation.

## Battelli in Albania for tolerance conference, election observation

Governments and parliaments should increase efforts to counter hate speech on-air and online, OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli said Tuesday at the opening of the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-discrimination in Tirana.

Battelli urged countries to use existing laws or adopt new ones in line with their OSCE commitments on freedom of expression. He also focused on the need to counter discriminatory stereotypes among younger people, to counter racist content in the media, to increase Holocaust awareness programmes, and to identify necessary resources to accomplish these goals. Battelli is also in Albania to begin his work representing the OSCE as the Special Co-ordinator appointed to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission to the 23 June elections. "These elections will be another test of how ready the political actors are to contribute actively and constructively to the work of the country's institutions

despite their political competition and controversies about the interpretation and implementation of laws," said Battelli. "The most important OSCE objective is to enable the citizens to assess the performance of the political competitors and to make their choice without unfair impediments on the electoral process."

Battelli said a campaign focused on allegations of electoral irregularities would further alienate voters and add more obstacles to Albania's path towards EU membership.

Battelli's extensive pre-electoral visit continues until Friday and includes meeting with Prime Minister Sali Berisha and other government officials. Throughout the next days, the delegation, which includes OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle, will meet government and opposition representatives, the election administration, civil society, media analysts, and members of the international community in Tirana, including the ODIHR.

## Conference Team visits Istanbul to prepare for Annual Session

The OSCE PA's conference team was in Istanbul last week preparing for the 22nd Annual Session to be held 29 June - 3 July 2013 hosted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The team, which included Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhaev, Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge and Administrative Director Kurt Lerras, visited the Lutfi Kirdar Congress Center where all of the Assembly's meetings will be held. They met extensively with the personnel of the Congress Centre and local authorities

in order to co-ordinate all organizational and logistical aspects for the Annual Session including lodging, transportation, security, protocol, the general programme and related events. Several speakers of parliament are expected to attend the Annual Session.

The deadline for supplementary items is **23 May**. Please ensure your delegation has registered so signatures can be counted. All other deadlines related to the Istanbul Annual Session can be found at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org).