

Battelli and Nothelle visit Albania in preparation for elections

OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia) visited Albania last week representing the OSCE as the Special Co-ordinator appointed to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission to the 23 June parliamentary elections. Accompanied by OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle, Battelli held meetings with Prime Minister Sali Berisha, Speaker of Parliament Jozefina Topalli and other government officials.

The delegation also met opposition representatives, election administration officials, civil society representatives, media analysts, and members of the international community, including the OSCE Presence in Albania and the ODIHR.

“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, who serves as OSCE PA Treasurer, is an



Andreas Nothelle and Roberto Battelli with Conny McCormack, OSCE/ODIHR On-site Co-ordinator.

experienced election observer and has led several OSCE PA observer delegations, including to Montenegro (2012), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2011), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010), and most recently to Bulgaria earlier this month. He will report on both the Albanian and Bulgarian elections at next month’s Standing Committee meeting during the Istanbul Annual Session.

More than 40 OSCE PA observers from 12 countries are expected to take part in the Albanian election observation mission.

Grossruck participates in South East Europe Speakers Conference

OSCE PA President Wolfgang Grossruck participated in the 10th Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the South East European Co-operation Process, held in Ohrid on 27-28 May. With a focus on the economic crisis and other challenges, the Conference offered a parliamentary forum for dialogue on issues of common interest for the SEE region.

In his remarks, Grossruck stressed the importance of parliamentary involvement in decision-making as well as parliamentary oversight to ensure good governance. Emphasizing the responsibilities of parliamentarians as the most direct link to the people, he encouraged greater inter-parliamentary dialogue in order to counter the existing democratic deficit.

Accompanied by Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli, OSCE PA Special Representative Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, Ambassador Brigitte Brenner, Head of the EU and International Services of the Austrian Parliament and Lukas Mussi, Senior Advisor of the Austrian Parliament, President Grossruck held talks with Ana Pavlovska-Daneva, Head of the OSCE PA Delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The delegation also visited the OSCE Mission to Skopje, where they met with Head of Mission, Ambassador Ralf Breth and Deputy Head of Mission, Ambassador Marianne Berez, to discuss

the latest developments in the region. Grossruck also used the opportunity to meet with the host of the upcoming Annual Session in Istanbul, the President of the Turkish Parliament Cemil Çiçek, as well as other Speakers of Parliament present at the meeting.

29 valid supplementary items

Parliamentarians have supported 29 items to be debated at the Annual Session next month in Istanbul. The supplementary items, covering issues including international adoption, media freedom, Arctic policy and the humanitarian crisis in Syria, still require support from a 2/3 vote of the Standing Committee before being included in the agenda for further committee debate in Istanbul.

All supplementary items, and the list of their co-sponsors, will be available in their original languages this week at www.oscepa.org.

Delegations are kindly reminded of the following deadlines:

- Compromise supplementary items and amendments to General Committee draft resolutions: **13 June**
- Amendments to supplementary items: **20 June**