

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA Turkish Delegation, President issue statements regarding Istanbul

Emin Onen, Head of the OSCE PA's Turkish Delegation, sent a letter to Members of the Assembly Wednesday providing assurances that the ongoing demonstrations in Istanbul will not be a security concern for participants of the 22nd Annual Session. He has personally been in contact with relevant authorities and has been informed that there are no restrictions near the Lutfi Kirdar International Convention and Exhibition Center or the hotels where delegates will be staying in Istanbul.

In a separate statement issued Wednesday, OSCE PA President Wolfgang Grossruck offered appreciation to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for its assurances that the situation in Istanbul "will not hinder our meetings and debates

on important global issues related to our shared commitments to comprehensive security, including human rights."

Grossruck welcomed the dialogue that the government has entered into with several protest leaders but regretted that violence continued after the discussions. "Whether demonstrators stand or sit, speak or sing, they have a basic right to assemble and freely express themselves, and it must be respected," he said. "However, we respect a government's duty to preserve peaceful order, and those who commit and incite vandalism and violence should receive a proportionate response from law enforcement." He added that mass arrests "are not emblematic of a democracy."

His full statement is available at www.oscepa.org.

PA staff on the ground in Albania ahead of elections



Andreas Nothelle (left) and Roberto Battelli (right) meet with the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Amb. Eugen Wollfarth, on 19 June.

The PA's election observation team is in Tirana this week in preparation for the 23 June Albanian parliamentary elections. Around 50 PA election experts are expected to participate in the election observation mission, including parliamentarians from 15 OSCE participating States.

OSCE PA Special Representative for South East Europe Roberto Battelli is the OSCE Special Co-ordinator and leads the short-term OSCE observation mission. Battelli, a member of parliament from Slovenia, has been observing elections in South East Europe for two decades, participating in 19

missions in the region since 1994. He has led five OSCE election observation missions, most recently to Montenegro's parliamentary elections last October.

Joao Soares, a member of parliament from Portugal, will be the Head of the PA delegation within the mission. Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle will serve as the mission's chief of staff. Director of Presidential Administration Roberto Montella, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk, Senior Adviser to the Special Co-ordinator Andreas Baker and Presidential Assistant Christian Pauzenberger will support the delegation as well.

In May, Roberto Battelli and Ambassador Nothelle visited Albania for a pre-election assessment. They held meetings with the Prime Minister, Speaker of Parliament 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.

The OSCE PA has observed elections in Albania six times.

Aleknaite Abramikiene participates in OSCE Security Days

Speaking at the OSCE Security Days event in Vienna Monday, Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene (MP, Lithuania), Rapporteur of the OSCE PA's Committee on Political Affairs and Security, highlighted the role of parliamentary diplomacy in contributing to the process of building a security community.

Aleknaite Abramikiene participated in the opening panel of the two-day OSCE Security Days event, entitled "The OSCE in the 21st Century: Regional Security Organization and Community." It was moderated by Edward Lucas, International Editor of *The Economist*, and featured former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov, former

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Dora Bakoyannis (MP, Greece), and former Federal Chancellor of Austria Wolfgang Schüssel.



Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene, flanked by Wolfgang Schüssel, former Federal Chancellor of Austria, and Igor Ivanov, former Foreign Minister of Russia, addresses OSCE Security Days on 17 June.