

Krivokapic addresses PACE Standing Committee meeting in Paris



OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and PA President Ranko Krivokapic at the PACE Standing Committee meeting on 7 March.

OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic addressed the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Paris last week, calling for expanded co-operation between the Assemblies and participated in an exchange of views on the situation in Ukraine.

Krivokapic underscored the need for continued co-operation to maintain the quality of election observation missions, an area in which the Assemblies have worked together successfully in the past.

The PA President also called for continued co-ordination between the Assemblies on promoting electoral reform, the development of independent judiciaries and free and vibrant media environments in Europe's emerging democracies. He identified the rise of xenophobia and far-right parties, as well as threats to parliamentary oversight of governments in the name of combating terrorism, as issues of particular concern in some of Europe's established democracies.

On Ukraine, Krivokapic said any plans to resolve the current situation "must begin with the full sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country."

Following his address, Krivokapic held bilateral meetings with PACE President Anne Brasseur and Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjorn Jagland.

The sides discussed their activities regarding the Ukraine crisis, as well as plans for co-operation on future election-monitoring missions, including Ukraine's upcoming presidential election.

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and PA Vice-Presidents Alain Neri (France) and George Tsereteli (Georgia) accompanied President Krivokapic in Paris.

OSCE PA in Belgrade for Serbian election observation

OSCE PA staff members have been on the ground in Belgrade since Monday in preparation for the election observation of Serbia's parliamentary elections on 16 March. The OSCE PA mission, being co-ordinated by Director of Elections Andreas Baker and Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk, will consist of around 50 observers, including some 40 Members of Parliament.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office has designated Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), OSCE PA Treasurer and Special Representative on South East Europe, as Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission. OSCE PA

President Ranko Krivokapic has appointed Senator Luigi Compagna (Italy) as Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observation mission.

The OSCE PA mission is working closely with the OSCE/ODIHR mission, led by Ambassador Boris Frlec (Slovenia), and with the observer delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, led by Pedro Agramunt (Spain).

The OSCE PA has previously observed Serbian parliamentary elections in 2012, 2008, 2007, 2003 and 2000 in addition to several presidential elections.

OSCE PA to observe presidential election in Ukraine

OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic has recommended to Swiss Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Didier Burkhalter that former OSCE PA President Joao Soares (Portugal) be appointed Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission to the 25 May presidential election in Ukraine. The OSCE PA's First Committee Chair, Makis Voridis (Greece), has been appointed as head of the OSCE PA delegation of the election observation mission.

Soares, who serves as the OSCE PA President's Special Representative on South Caucasus and as Portugal's Head of Delegation, is a veteran election observer who led the election observation mission to the Ukrainian presidential election in

2010. Voridis serves as head of the Hellenic Delegation to the OSCE PA and as Special Representative on Migration. He has participated in numerous election observation missions, most recently serving as Deputy Head of the OSCE PA's delegation to the 9 October 2013 presidential election in Azerbaijan.

Soares and Voridis plan to conduct a pre-election assessment visit to Ukraine as soon as possible.

The OSCE PA has observed elections in Ukraine in 2012, 2010, 2007, 2006, 2004, 2002, and 1998.

The special debate at the PA's recent Winter Meeting in Vienna was devoted to the crisis in Ukraine, involving nearly 30 parliamentarians, including several Ukrainian MPs.