

Ukrainian Ambassador visits International Secretariat; Preparations continue for election observation in Ukraine

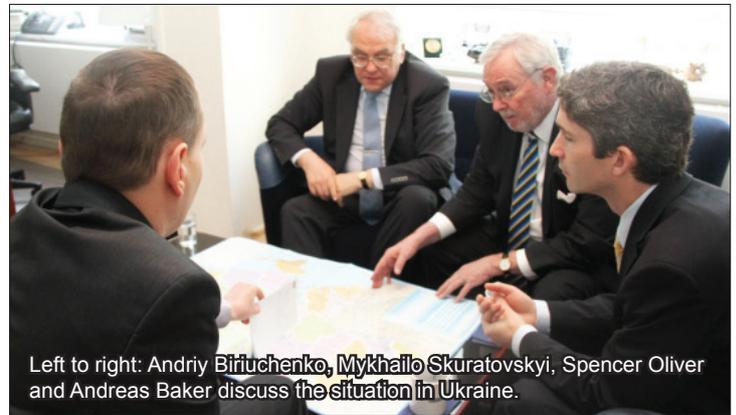
OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Programme Director Anna Chernova and Director of Elections Andreas Baker met in Copenhagen Wednesday with the Ukrainian Ambassador to Denmark, Mykhailo Skuratovskyi, to discuss the situation in the country and the upcoming election.

Secretary General Oliver and Ambassador Skuratovskyi discussed OSCE engagement in Ukraine, particularly the preparation for the 25 May early presidential election. The Ambassador described some of the actions that the government is taking to deal with the current unrest, particularly in the east of the country.

“The government of Ukraine looks forward to welcoming the OSCE’s parliamentarians to observe the upcoming presidential election. During our meeting, the Secretary General and I discussed the current situation in Ukraine, the state of play of the Geneva accord implementation and our intent to hold free, democratic and transparent elections, despite efforts to destabilize the situation,” Skuratovskyi said.

Oliver briefed the Ambassador on the plans of the OSCE PA election observers. Advance teams of election observers from the OSCE PA will begin visits to Ukraine next week as a part of the Assembly’s election observation mission. Several visits are planned in coming weeks including to regions in the north, east, south and west of the country.

The PA has been active in preparing the observation mission since March, when Joao Soares (MP, Portugal), who will serve as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observer mission, led a visit to Kyiv together with Makis



Left to right: Andriy Biriuchenko, Mykhailo Skuratovskyi, Spencer Oliver and Andreas Baker discuss the situation in Ukraine.

Voridis (MP, Greece), who will head the OSCE PA election observation delegation, and Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland).

Working in close co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission, and co-located on their premises, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk is already in Kyiv and will remain in Ukraine to ensure the smooth conduct of the deployment of observers. The early deployment of Ms. Sabashuk is supported by a generous extra-budgetary contribution by the German Foreign Ministry.

In addition to ODIHR, the PA will be working closely with observers from the European Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Ambassador Skuratovskyi was accompanied on his visit to the Secretariat by First Secretary at the Embassy of Ukraine in Copenhagen, Andriy Biriuchenko.

OSCE PA arrives in Skopje for election observation mission

Members of the OSCE PA International Secretariat have arrived in Skopje in advance of the parliamentary elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 27 April.

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter has designated Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) as Special Co-ordinator of the mission to observe the vote. Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) will serve as Head of the OSCE PA Delegation, which includes around 30 parliamentarians from 13 OSCE participating States.

“I look forward to arriving in Skopje and hope to observe an election that will help consolidate democratic gains. The country has an important opportunity in the upcoming vote to reaffirm its commitment to free, fair and transparent elections,” Muttonen said.

As Special Co-ordinator, Muttonen will address the OSCE short-term observers at a briefing on 25 April, and will deliver the post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE at a press

conference on 28 April. The OSCE PA delegation has meetings scheduled this week with Speaker of Parliament Trajko Veljanovski, Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikola Poposki, and with members of the OSCE Mission to Skopje. Following their arrival Wednesday, Roberto Montella, Francesco Pagani and Firuze Demir from the OSCE PA’s Vienna Liaison Office met with the OSCE/ODIHR long-term observers.

Members of the OSCE PA delegation will travel to polling stations across the country, working closely with long-term observers from the OSCE/ODIHR and in co-ordination with colleagues from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The mission will assess the elections against democratic commitments contained in the OSCE’s 1990 Copenhagen Document. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has previously observed parliamentary elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2011, 2008, 2002, 1998 and 1994, in addition to several presidential elections.