

News from Copenhagen

PA staff and Azerbaijani Parliament finalize preparations for Annual Session



Setting up the rooms.

The conference organizing team of the OSCE PA International Secretariat, led by Deputy Secretaries General Gustavo Pallares and Semyon Dzakhaev, has arrived in Baku to finalize preparations for the 23rd Annual Session.

Culminating two years of advance work in making the Annual Session a reality, including several preparatory visits, the team is holding meetings this week with staff of the Azerbaijani Parliament and the Conference Center of the Fairmont Baku Hotel, where the meeting will take place. Hosted by the *Milli Mejlis* (Parliament) of Azerbaijan, the Session will be held under the theme “Helsinki +40: Towards Human Security for All,” and runs from 28 June to 2 July. The team has also already begun preparations for the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki, Finland.

Pallares and Dzakhaev, along with Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge, Administrative Director Kurt Lerras, Assistant to the Secretary General Dana Bjerregaard, and IT Specialist Stephen Paul are meeting with counterparts from the *Milli Mejlis* and the Conference Center to ensure that everything is in order when nearly 300 OSCE parliamentarians arrive later this week.

On-site preparation currently underway includes the construction of offices, layout of rooms for various meetings, starting the process of three teams of language specialists continuing the translation of all documents and amendments, setting up IT networks, and working with parliament staff on computer-related matters. Staff members are also dealing with logistical matters, including directional signs, airport and hotel transport, and finalizing the details of social functions.

Nearly 500 participants from 54 OSCE participating States have registered for the Annual Session, plus delegations from

five Partners for Co-operation. In all, the number of people registered including from the International Secretariat is 608. Counting the participation of translators, revisers, typists, interpreters, procedural specialists from Britain and OSCE PA staff, the size of the International Secretariat expands from 25 to 71 to manage all aspects of the Annual Session.



Distributing documents.

The meeting includes a packed agenda with 14 supplementary items to be considered in addition to the three general committee resolutions. There are 124 amendments to the resolutions of the three general committees, plus 56 amendments to the supplementary items. Original committee reports and draft resolutions have already been distributed in all six official OSCE languages and supplementary items in English, French and Russian. Translators are working this week in Baku to prepare the amendments in the working languages. After final adoption, texts will be available in English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

In addition to the nearly 200 votes on amendments and resolutions, participants will hold elections for the Bureau, including for the President of the Assembly, three vice-presidents, and nine committee officers. The Assembly will also adopt the annual budget for the coming fiscal year.

The opening plenary session on Saturday will be highlighted by speeches from high-ranking officials including the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Swiss Foreign Minister and President of the Confederation Didier Burkhalter, and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev.

The second plenary session later in the afternoon will include interventions by several prominent speakers including Speaker of the Russian State Duma Sergey Naryshkin and Ukrainian Deputy Speaker of Parliament Ruslan Koshulynskyi.

Meetings of the Session will be streaming on the PA's website at www.oscepa.org, and selected photos will be posted on the PA's Flickr page at www.flickr.com/oscepa.



Meeting with translators.



Preparing the registration area.