

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA 2015 Winter Meeting opens with Mediterranean Forum



The Mediterranean Forum was chaired by OSCE PA Vice-President Isabel Pozuelo (right).

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 14th Winter Meeting opened this week in Vienna with the Mediterranean Forum on Wednesday afternoon. Chaired by Vice-President Isabel Pozuelo (Spain), the Forum was addressed by Ambassador Rudiger Ludeking, Chairman of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE, and by Heads of the Parliamentary Delegations from the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

Opening the Mediterranean Forum, Pozuelo spoke about a variety of issues facing the Mediterranean region, including migration, threats posed by violent extremism, enduring challenges of the Arab Spring, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the debate over the status of Palestine.

Ambassador Ludeking described the work of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and its efforts to address current threats and their root causes. In particular he discussed issues of migration, trafficking in human beings, terrorism and extremism, and renewable energy.

Also addressing the Mediterranean Forum were the Heads of the Parliamentary Delegations from Algeria, Israel, Morocco, and Tunisia. Held under the theme "Promoting

Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean," it was the first time that a Mediterranean Forum was held in conjunction with a Winter Meeting.

Nearly 250 parliamentarians are gathering this week in Vienna for the Winter Meeting, being held at the Congress Center of the Hofburg. Expected to address the plenaries are OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia Ivica Dacic and OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland). OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) will present her report at the joint session on 20 February, followed by a debate.

The Special Debate on the situation in Ukraine will take place on 20 February. The Austrian Parliament is offering a reception for the members of the Parliamentary Assembly on the evening of 19 February after official OSCE PA business has concluded for the day.

Held every February since 2002, the Winter Meeting provides an opportunity for the three General Committees to hold discussions and interact with high-level OSCE officials. The meeting also serves as an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear presentations by the three committee rapporteurs and to discuss their ideas for the upcoming Annual Session, this year being held in Helsinki's historic Finlandia Hall.

Bureau adopts Credentials Committee recommendations on Russian Delegation

Following a credentials challenge to the Russian Delegation, the Assembly's Bureau met Wednesday, held an exchange of views and voted unanimously not to recognize Olga Kovitidi as a Member of the OSCE PA. The Bureau made its decision following an official challenge by the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA regarding the nomination.

The Bureau considered the recommendation of a Credentials Committee, whose members were appointed by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva for this purpose. Members of both the Bureau and of the Credentials Committee heard statements by Members of the Russian and Ukrainian Delegations to the OSCE PA before considering the matter.

The Credentials Committee recommended that the Bureau reject the Russian Federation's designation of Ms. Kovitidi



The OSCE PA Bureau met on Wednesday to consider recommendations from the Credentials Committee.

citing Rule 1.1 and Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure on the composition and membership of the OSCE PA.

The full Report and Recommendation is available at www.oscepa.org.