

## Helsinki +40 seminar focuses on reconsolidation of European security



Project Chair Joao Soares opens the Stockholm Seminar on 11 March 2015, photo courtesy of Melker Dahlstrand/The Riksdag Administration.

The third seminar of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project was held Wednesday in Stockholm, hosted by the Swedish Parliament and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, one of the country's leading think tanks. Held under the theme "The OSCE's role in (re)consolidating European security," the event included the participation of experts, policymakers, ambassadors and OSCE parliamentarians who debated how the European security architecture can be made more effective in responding to crises and the OSCE's potential to counter challenges through its cross-dimensional approach to security, as well as the Parliamentary Assembly's role in the OSCE.

In opening the seminar, Project Chair Joao Soares (MP, Portugal) noted that the changes in the geopolitical landscape created by the Ukraine crisis have presented new challenges to European security which the OSCE's existing capacities may not be sufficient to fully address. "Inside the OSCE, the Parliamentary Assembly is the only truly democratic institution that exists," Soares said. "The governmental side works according to the consensus rule, which places strict limitations on actions that the OSCE can take and on the very language that the Organization uses to describe events taking place in the OSCE area."

Also addressing the seminar were Tobias Billstrom, First Deputy Speaker of the Swedish Parliament; Mats Karlsson, Director, Swedish Institute of International Affairs; Rolf Ekeus, Ambassador and former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities; Mark Rhinard, Senior Research Fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs; Lars-

Erik Lundin, former EU Ambassador to the OSCE; Anna Wieslander, Deputy Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs; Goran Lennmarker, expert and former OSCE PA President; Klas Bergman, independent writer and former OSCE PA Communications Director; and Spencer Oliver, OSCE PA Secretary General and Special Co-ordinator of the Helsinki +40 Colloquium Project.

Also participating in the seminar were OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and Programme Officer Maria Chepurina from the International Secretariat.

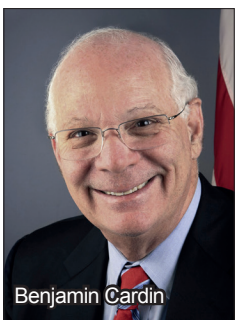
In his remarks, Secretary General Oliver said that the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Final Act is one of the most critical junctures in OSCE history. "Helsinki +40' sounds catchy," he said, "but this is no time for resting comfortably on our laurels. In short, our Organization faces a crisis moment, for the 40th anniversary has come at a time when world events and flagrant violations of the Helsinki Final Act do not merely present a challenge to us, but threaten to destroy us."

PA Vice-President Kent Harstedt (MP, Sweden) also offered remarks, noting the importance that his country attaches to the OSCE's work. "Through its active involvement in the Organization and its Parliamentary Assembly, Sweden has always demonstrated a deep commitment to the mission of the OSCE, as articulated in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act," he said. "As the 40th anniversary approaches, we are proud to host this seminar to promote reform and reaffirm the Organization's ongoing relevance in the spirit of Helsinki."

The Helsinki +40 Project's first and second seminars were hosted by the Russian International Affairs Council in Moscow and the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Washington, respectively. Further events will be held in Copenhagen in April, in co-operation with the Danish Institute for International Studies, and in Belgrade in May, in co-operation with the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence.

The Project will culminate in a final Colloquium held in conjunction with the PA's 24th Annual Session in Helsinki.

## Cardin appointed Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance



Benjamin Cardin

U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin was appointed by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) as the Assembly's first Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance. The mandate of the newly established position includes raising awareness in and reporting to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on prejudice and discrimination in the OSCE area,

including anti-Semitism and other forms of race- and religion-based intolerance.

The Special Representative will report on the track records of OSCE participating States in combating these problems and advise the Assembly on developing new policies and strategies to promote dialogue and exchange of best practices within the Assembly. He will also communicate with relevant actors within the OSCE who work on these issues.

Cardin has served for more than a decade in the OSCE PA, holding the positions of Vice-President, Chair of the Second Committee and Deputy Head of the U.S. Delegation. Within Congress he is a senior member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission and a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.