

News from Copenhagen

New OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Secretary General to be nominated



Spencer Oliver (left) with the Secretaries General of the European Parliament, PACE and NATO PA, January 2014.

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva has announced that the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly will consider nominations for the post of Secretary General to succeed PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver after his term comes to an end on December 31 of this year.

In a letter to President Kanerva, SG Oliver stated that the Assembly's agenda for the remainder of this year contains very important items, including the ongoing Helsinki +40 Project, the Annual Session in Helsinki, the Autumn Meeting in Ulaanbaatar, and several election observation projects, noting that the process of nominating and electing his successor "should not be allowed to detract from the work and success of these endeavors."

"Under the circumstances," he said, "I cannot at this time and in good conscience seek an additional five-year term as Secretary General." Oliver also expressed his gratitude for the support he has received from the leaders and members of the Assembly, particularly the American Delegation, during his time as Secretary General, noting that he is proud of the Assembly's accomplishments.

"The International Secretariat now stands as one of the most efficient, effective and influential secretariats in the international parliamentary field," he said. "We have built one of the most respected and professional staff teams that has ever been created, and we have consistently carried out our responsibilities within our budgets and with perfect audits by outside, independent, professional auditors – an achievement of which I am particularly proud."

In a letter to Oliver, President Kanerva expressed appreciation for his work in promoting the Assembly. "Much of what the OSCE PA is today is due to your tireless efforts

to create, develop, promote and often times defend the parliamentary side of the organization," he said.

In a letter to all PA Delegations, Kanerva said, "Today, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has an excellent multinational staff of dedicated professionals who are willing to work hard to best serve the members of parliament that belong to the OSCE PA. We should all make sure that we preserve and protect this great asset of ours in the years to come."

Kanerva told the Delegations that, "We will now start the process of selection for a new Secretary General. As I said recently both in Basel and in Vienna, this process will be conducted in an open and transparent manner and you will be duly informed of the different steps we will undertake. The advisory board I appointed in Basel as well as the Secretariat will support me and the Bureau in the process of a nomination that will have to be confirmed by the Standing Committee."

Oliver was chosen as the Secretary General at the first Bureau meeting of the OSCE PA in October 1992 and confirmed unanimously by the Standing Committee at their meeting in Copenhagen in 1993. The Standing Committee decided in 1995 to provide for a five-year term for the Secretary General. At that time Oliver was unanimously re-elected and was subsequently re-elected three times for five-year terms.

Previously, he served 22 years as a staff member in the United States Congress, including as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Helsinki Commission from 1976-1985 and then as Chief Counsel of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives until January 1993. He also served in several senior diplomatic positions on U.S. delegations to CSCE Review and Expert Meetings between 1977 and 1993.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary General vacancy has been announced to the Standing Committee and the post is advertised outside and within the organization, with a full vacancy announcement and application procedure available on the PA's website. All applications will be considered by the Bureau, which will nominate a candidate to be confirmed by the Standing Committee. Documents related to the selection of the next Secretary General can be found under "Announcements" at www.oscepa.org.

Eventful spring includes Bureau meeting, Helsinki +40 seminar, election observation

The OSCE PA is preparing for a busy spring, with the annual Bureau meeting being held next month in Copenhagen, a Helsinki +40 seminar being held on the margins of this meeting, and an election observation mission planned for the United Kingdom's parliamentary elections on 7 May.

The Bureau meeting, to be held 27 April at the Danish Parliament, will be addressed by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and Head of the OSCE PA's Danish Delegation Peter Juel Jensen. It will include reports by

Treasurer Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia) and Secretary General Spencer Oliver, as well as presentations by the rapporteurs of the General Committees followed by debates.

Following the Bureau meeting, the Danish Parliament will host the fourth of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 seminars, co-organized by the OSCE PA and the Danish Institute of International Studies. The seminar will focus on the implications which the Organization's lack of legal personality has for the operational capacity of the OSCE.