

## Special Rep Mariani and Committee Chair Aknazarova visit Turkmenistan



Special Representative Thierry Mariani (right) speaking at the seminar with Gurbangul Bayramova, Deputy Chairperson of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan (centre), and Second Committee Chair Roza Aknazarova (left).

Thierry Mariani (MP, France), the OSCE PA's Special Representative for Central Asia, and Roza Aknazarova (MP, Kyrgyzstan), Chair of the OSCE PA's Second Committee, were in Turkmenistan this week, where they met with members of the Turkmen parliament (Mejlis) and officials from the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat. On 14-15 April, a seminar hosted by the Mejlis featured presentations by Mariani and Aknazarova, as well as OSCE PA Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

In the two-day seminar conducted by the OSCE PA and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, parliamentarians from Turkmenistan discussed the activities of the Assembly and opportunities to deepen their engagement in its work.

"This seminar marks a new step in co-operation between the Mejlis of Turkmenistan, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly," said Ambassador Ivo Petrov, the Head of the Centre, in a message to participants.

Following a welcome address by Akdja Nurberdiyeva, the Chairperson of the Mejlis and the Head of Turkmenistan's

Delegation to the OSCE PA, Mariani, Aknazarova and Chepurina briefed more than 20 MPs in attendance. Topics included the structure and mandate of the Assembly, the work of its committees and special representatives, its voting procedures and rules, and its election observation activities.

Mariani and Aknazarova praised the work of OSCE Centre in Ashgabat for its commitment to furthering OSCE values in Turkmenistan and for its support for increased Turkmen engagement in the Assembly. "We all welcome a more active role for this country and its parliamentarians within the OSCE, which will mean greater support for Turkmenistan as it pursues needed reforms, along with more opportunities for us to learn about the Turkmen perspective," Mariani said. "I applaud this joint initiative by the Centre in Ashgabat and the PA and hope for more co-operative ventures like this one throughout Central Asia."

Mariani also held a series of bilateral meetings in Ashgabat on 13-14 April, discussing a broad range of issues with Turkmen and international officials. He met with officials from the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia to consider border security, energy and water issues. Mariani also met with Amandurdy Arabov, the Director of the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan, for a discussion on the Institute's modalities, its work with Turkmenistan's citizens, and the Institute's efforts to promote best legislative practices.

## SG Oliver meets with members of U.S. OSCE PA Delegation in Washington



In Washington, OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver met on Monday with several members of the United States Helsinki Commission and leaders of the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE PA. In a meeting with Senator Roger Wicker, who serves as Chair of the OSCE PA's First Committee; Senator Ben Cardin, who was recently appointed the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance; and Congressman Robert Aderholt, an OSCE PA Vice-President, Oliver provided a briefing on the OSCE's response to the Ukraine crisis, as well as preparations for the upcoming Bureau Meeting in Copenhagen and the Annual Session in Helsinki this July.

## Secretariat welcomes new team of OSCE PA Research Fellows

Over the past week, the OSCE PA's Copenhagen office has been joined by a new team of research fellows from the United Kingdom, France and Portugal. A fourth fellow, from Kyrgyzstan, is expected to arrive by the end of the month. In addition to the research skills they bring, the fellows provide the Secretariat with capacity in nine languages.

George Leech, from the UK, holds a master's degree in international and European relations from Linköping University. Before joining the PA, he completed an internship with the OSCE/ODIHR in Warsaw. French fellow Mathieu Lemoine holds a master's degree in European and international affairs from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Strasbourg and has worked as an OSCE Junior Professional Officer at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat. Ana Isabel Vale holds a master's degree in European law from Leiden University in the Netherlands and has interned at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The new fellows join Anna Di Domenico, from Italy, who has been with the Secretariat since September 2014.