

News from Copenhagen

PA Annual Session to mark OSCE's founding in Helsinki birthplace

Nearly 300 OSCE parliamentarians from more than 50 countries will gather in the Finnish capital 5-9 July for the Parliamentary Assembly's 24th Annual Session under the theme "Recalling the Spirit of Helsinki." The event – the largest on the Assembly's calendar – will be held on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Organization's founding. Hosted by the Parliament of Finland, the *Eduskunta*, it will take place in historic Finlandia Hall, where the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975.

Finnish President Sauli Niinisto, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver will address the opening plenary, while OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic will address the closing plenary.

The Session will feature debate and decision-making on a wide range of issues of concern, including the situation in and around Ukraine, the refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean and wider OSCE area, terrorism, arms control, climate change, political pressure on civil society and much more. Principal resolutions from each of the Assembly's three General Committees, as well as valid supplementary items, will be considered and following their adoption, will be included in the Declaration and annexes. More than 100 amendments to the draft resolutions and supplementary items are expected to be considered.

The Session will also feature the presentation of the final results of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project, which has marked the milestone anniversary with a series of seminars throughout 2014 and 2015 aimed at inspiring organizational



reform. A number of side events have also been scheduled during the Annual Session's lunch breaks.

The Assembly will hold elections during the Helsinki meeting for the posts of President, several Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Committee Officers. The

Assembly's Standing Committee will vote on the Bureau's recommended candidate for the post of Secretary General, with a term beginning in 2016.

Following the Annual Session, the OSCE participating States will convene for an informal high-level meeting in Helsinki on 10 July. The discussion, which will be held in two parts, will take place at the level of Deputy Ministers and will be addressed by the OSCE PA President. OSCE Troika Ministers will participate in the opening of the event and hold a separate OSCE Troika Ministerial Meeting.

Draft resolutions, supplementary items, updated programmes and practical information about the Annual Session are available at www.oscepa.org. The OSCE PA will live-stream the Session on its home page and will be posting updates on Twitter using the hashtag #PAHelsinki15.

Annual Session deadline reminder

Delegations are kindly reminded of the following deadlines for the Annual Session in Helsinki on 5-9 July.

- **21 June:** Copenhagen Deadline for Amendments to Committee Draft Resolutions
- **28 June:** Copenhagen Deadline for Amendments to Supplementary Items

PA delegation to hold meetings in Italy regarding Mediterranean migrant crisis



Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal), the Chair of the OSCE PA's human rights committee, is beginning a four-day visit to Italy this week, with stops in Rome, Sicily and Lampedusa, to address the ongoing Mediterranean migrant crisis. Following a number of high-level meetings in Rome on Thursday, Santos, who will be joined by Second

Committee Rapporteur Marietta Tidei (MP, Italy) and OSCE PA Italian Delegation Member Cristina De Pietro, will then

travel to Lampedusa, the point of entry for many migrants.

The visit is being conducted in connection with World Refugee Day on 20 June and is supported by OSCE PA Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

Following a series of meetings and visits in Lampedusa, including to the Lampedusa First Aid and Reception Center, the OSCE PA delegation will continue to Catania and Mineo in Sicily, where they will meet with relevant officials and NGOs working on the Mediterranean migrant crisis. In Catania, the delegation will visit the SPRAR project, which is financed by the Ministry for the Interior and provides support to asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants, as well as the Caritas Diocesana di Catania Help Center. In Mineo, the delegation will visit the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers (CARA).