

News from Copenhagen

SG Oliver hosts counterparts from NATO PA and PACE in Copenhagen



NATO PA Secretary General David Hobbs and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver listen to Wojciech Sawicki during a meeting at the OSCE PA's Copenhagen headquarters on Wednesday, 26 Aug. 2015.

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver hosted his counterparts from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Wojciech Sawicki and David Hobbs, respectively, on Wednesday in Copenhagen. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on practices within Secretariats and compare calendars for upcoming meetings.

The Secretaries General discussed ongoing co-operation in the field of election observation, including expected missions in autumn 2015. Other topics of discussion included the challenges of finding hosts for meetings, gender balance in the parliamentary assemblies, and the effects of the transatlantic

security environment on the work of the assemblies. The ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine was also a topic of conversation, including the responses and initiatives of the assemblies related to the situation in the country, and the effects of Russian policies.

Members of the OSCE PA staff also participated in the meeting to discuss ongoing work in a number of areas, including election observation, communications strategies and logistics.

The Secretaries General agreed to continue ongoing consultations, which began in 2012 on Oliver's initiative, and have included meetings in Strasbourg and Brussels.

Secretary General Oliver visits Tbilisi ahead of 2016 Annual Session

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver paid a working visit to Georgia last week to assess the facilities and logistical preparations for the OSCE PA's 25th Annual Session, to be held July 2016 in Tbilisi.

The visit on 17-20 August included meetings with the Deputy Acting Head of the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Malkhaz Vakhtangashvili; the Head of the Parliament's Speaker's Cabinet, David Maghradze; the Head of the International Relations Department, Tamar Kolbaia; the Chairman of the Georgian Dream faction in Parliament, Giorgi Volski, and Members of the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE PA. Oliver also met Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili.

Oliver examined all of the hotels which will be hosting delegates to the meeting, as well as the Expo Georgia Centre, where all meetings will take place. Discussions with parliamentary officials focused on accommodation for parliamentarians and staff, local transportation, and possible excursions and cultural events being planned for the Session. Other topics of discussion included potential visa issues for some PA members.

The 2016 Annual Session is the second major meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly that the Georgian Parliament will host, having also hosted the 2012 Economic Conference in Batumi.

Muttonen and Harstedt to lead election observation in Kyrgyzstan, Belarus

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) has nominated OSCE PA Vice-Presidents Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) and Kent Harstedt (MP, Sweden) to lead upcoming election observation missions to Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, respectively.

Harstedt has participated in several missions and served as Special Co-ordinator of the October 2014 election observation to Ukraine. Muttonen, also an experienced election observer, served as Special Co-ordinator of the April 2014 election observation mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

From 14-17 July OSCE PA Director of Elections Andreas Baker participated in a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) organized by the OSCE/ODIHR to Minsk, meeting with officials, potential candidates, and other relevant interlocutors. Similarly, from 3-7 August Programme Officer Maria Chepurina participated in a NAM deployed to Bishkek. Both missions served as a useful opportunity to begin close co-operation with partners from the OSCE/ODIHR and assess the situation on the ground.

In preparation for observation missions to the elections in Kyrgyzstan on 4 October and Belarus on 11 October, the Secretariat has distributed invitations to delegations to nominate parliamentary observers for these elections.