

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella of Italy begins service



Roberto Montella of Italy took up his post this week as Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, bringing two decades of experience in international politics to the position. He has worked over the years in both the governmental and parliamentary sides of the OSCE, most recently serving as OSCE PA Director of Presidential Administration.

"I have spent most of my career trying to build bridges between conflicting sides in South East Europe. I consider creating harmony and facilitating dialogue to be the central pillar of my approach," Montella said.

"As Secretary General, I will strive to do the same. That means strengthening links, and forging new ones, between the Assembly and the OSCE's governmental side and with other international organizations. This is not a goal in itself, but a way to help our parliamentarians deliver concrete results to the 'end users' of the OSCE's products – namely, the citizens of the OSCE area, and particularly those who live under difficult security situations."

Montella previously held positions at OSCE field missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia and Montenegro, filling a range of advisory, peace-building and management functions. He also served as Head of the OSCE South Serbia Regional Office and Head of the European Center for Minority Issues in Kosovo.

"I believe that in the face of the tremendous challenges affecting the OSCE area today, we need intensive, international parliamentary co-operation and dialogue more than ever before. The OSCE PA is one of the world's vital forums for problem-solving and reinforcement of shared commitments. I will work every day to defend its health and facilitate the important work of its elected members," the new Secretary General concluded.

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) said: "I am confident in Roberto Montella's ability to facilitate and help implement the wide-ranging work of our Assembly during this crucial juncture in the OSCE's history. On behalf of my fellow parliamentarians, I look forward to our fruitful work together in the years ahead."

Montella has taken part in nearly 40 election observation missions in the OSCE area and the Middle East, including as Co-ordinator of Long-Term Election Observers for the Carter Center. He has served as political advisor to an Italian senator and PACE Vice-President, among other advisory roles. He also holds campaign-related and corporate experience. He speaks Italian, French, English and Serbian.

The OSCE PA Standing Committee voted in favor of Montella at 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki, following a unanimous vote by the Bureau. Montella succeeds the Assembly's first Secretary General, Spencer Oliver.

International Secretariat preparing for upcoming Assembly activities

The International Secretariat is preparing for a busy 2016, with a number of official visits being planned, in addition to three major conferences, as well as Bureau meetings in Copenhagen and Hamburg. Several staff members will be in Vienna next week for the official opening of the German OSCE Chairmanship and annual heads of mission meeting, taking place 14-15 January.

Towards the end of January, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva is planning a visit to the South Caucasus, and at the beginning of February, a high-level OSCE PA delegation will visit the Czech Republic and Serbia as part of the Parliamentary Assembly's ongoing efforts to promote a cohesive international response to the refugee and migrant crisis.

On 25-26 February, the OSCE PA will hold its Winter Meeting at OSCE headquarters in the Hofburg. Also next month, the PA's conference team will visit Georgia in preparation for the Assembly's 25th Annual Session, to be held 1-5 July in Tbilisi. The conference team visited Skopje in December to begin preparations for the Autumn Meeting, to be held 29 September to 2 October.

The annual Copenhagen OSCE PA Bureau meeting will take place 10-11 April at the Danish Parliament (Folketing). The Bureau will meet again at the end of the year in conjunction with the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg, to be held on 8-9 December 2016.

A number of election observation missions are also expected this year.