

News from Copenhagen

PA Secretary General meets U.S. lawmakers in Washington



L-R: Roberto Montella, Christopher Smith and Gustavo Pallares



Roberto Montella (right) meeting with staff members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.



L-R: Roberto Montella, Benjamin Cardin and Gustavo Pallares

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella met in Washington this week with members of the U.S. Delegation to the PA for discussions on the Assembly's ongoing work and a range of pressing OSCE issues, including the crisis in and around Ukraine and the migration crisis.

Joined by Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Montella met with Head of the U.S. Delegation and PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues Christopher Smith; Deputy Head of Delegation and Chair of the PA Committee on Political Affairs and Security Roger Wicker; PA Vice-President Robert Aderholt; PA Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Benjamin Cardin; and former PA President Alcee Hastings.

In addition to discussions that focused on the Assembly's recent work on the refugee and migrant crisis, the sides

discussed the Assembly's 2016 Annual Session in Tbilisi, Georgia, developments in Azerbaijan and South East Europe, and the upcoming general elections in the United States, which the PA plans to observe. Secretary General Montella underscored the value of active U.S. engagement in the PA and thanked the Delegation members for their leadership. He highlighted his intention to enhance co-operation between the PA and other OSCE bodies, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

While in Washington, Montella and Pallares also met with the staff of the U.S. Helsinki Commission; officials from the U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense; policy experts from Johns Hopkins University; and William Sweeney, President of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

PA observers arrive in Kazakhstan for early parliamentary elections

OSCE parliamentarians and staff are arriving in Astana this week to observe the 20 March early parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Frank-Walter Steinmeier has designated Marietta Tidei (MP, Italy) as Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission for the vote. Geir Joergen Bekkevold (MP, Norway) will serve as Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Delegation, which will include 55 MPs from 21 OSCE countries.

Special Co-ordinator Tidei is the Rapporteur of the OSCE PA's Second Committee. She served as OSCE Special Co-ordinator for the observation mission to the 2015

parliamentary elections in Tajikistan and has also observed elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States.

Geir Joergen Bekkevold is Head of the Norwegian Delegation to the OSCE PA. He worked with Tidei as Head of the OSCE PA Delegation of observers for the 2015 parliamentary elections in Tajikistan and has observed votes in several other countries. The PA has observed parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan in 1994, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2007 and 2012, as well as presidential elections in 2005 and 2011.

SG Montella meets with counterpart at NATO PA headquarters

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella visited Brussels on 10 March to meet with his counterpart at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Secretary General David Hobbs. Discussions focused on matters of administration, including staff rules and financial regulations, with the sides exchanging views on best practices to improve the Assemblies' work.

The Secretaries General also exchanged notes on upcoming calendar events and discussed how to improve the level of engagement of national delegations, particularly in terms of hosting meetings. Montella, who was accompanied by Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk, also met with NATO PA

staff members who provided overviews of ongoing activities. Hobbs and Montella agreed to continue co-operation, including with PACE Secretary General Wojciech Sawicki, who will host a meeting of the three SGs at the end of April.



Roberto Montella and David Hobbs