

News from Copenhagen

Leinsweiler seminar focuses on parliamentary contributions to conflict resolution



Participants at the Leinsweiler seminar.

Some 25 parliamentarians from 15 countries gathered in the French-German border region municipality of Leinsweiler, Germany, on 16-17 April to consider parliamentary contributions to OSCE efforts in addressing conflicts, hearing presentations from experts on reconciliation processes particularly in the Saar-Lor-Lux and Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino regions. The event, which included participation by MPs from several countries impacted by protracted conflicts, was opened by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and Treasurer Doris Barnett (MP, Germany).

“Over the last month, dramatic developments in Ukraine and in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, have once again demonstrated the destabilizing potential and human cost of conflict. Finding political will to overcome differences remains critical to finding solutions to all conflicts in the OSCE region, so Members of Parliament are an essential component of any solution for conflicts that the OSCE is mandated to deal with,” said President Kanerva.

The seminar featured remarks by several representatives of the OSCE’s governmental side. Dr. Gernot Erler, Special Representative of the Federal Government of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship 2016, delivered a speech on 16 April, and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors led a panel discussion on 17 April. Also participating were representatives from the OSCE/ODIHR and the Conflict



OSCE PA Treasurer Doris Barnett (Germany) with President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland).

Prevention Centre, as well as various experts on specific regions and topics.

The seminar, which brought together parliamentarians from Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Switzerland, was intended to provide parliamentarians from countries impacted by protracted conflicts with new ideas for conflict resolution and to gather their proposals, as a contribution to official conflict resolution discussions. The discussions took on an added urgency due to the recent significant military escalation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

“Talking about the past is critical to learning lessons, but it is not enough. This has therefore been an excellent opportunity to reflect on the common future that can result from reconciliation,” said Doris Barnett, who hosted the event on behalf of the German Parliament.

The seminar was organized by the German Parliament and the PA. Secretary General Roberto Montella and Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle participated in the event, which was supported by Marc Carillet, Francesco Pagani, Andreas Baker, Loic Poulain, and Tim Knoblauch from the International Secretariat. It followed a previous event last year dedicated to exchanging experiences from the Franco-German border regions with MPs from Russia and Ukraine.

Dobesova, Montella at HCNM event

Secretary General Roberto Montella is in The Hague this week with Third Committee Vice-Chair Ivana Dobesova (MP, Czech Republic) for an event organized by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities marking the 20th anniversary of “The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities.”

The two-day event, which includes a high-level panel discussion on Wednesday and an expert- and practitioner-level meeting on Thursday, is emphasizing the role of education in preventing conflicts.

Dobesova and Montella, together with Farimah Daftary from the International Secretariat, will meet with HCNM Astrid Thors Thursday.

2017 meeting locations announced

In a letter to Members of the Standing Committee and Secretaries of Delegations, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella announced Tuesday that the venues for the Assembly’s 2017 statutory meetings are confirmed. Montella noted that the PA has received official invitations from the Parliaments of Belarus and Andorra for the 2017 Annual Session and Autumn Meeting, respectively. The 26th Annual Session will take place in Minsk in the first half of July and the Autumn Meeting will take place in Andorra la Vella in the first half of October. The Winter Meeting, as always, will take place in Vienna in late February.