

News from Copenhagen

Italy's Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs holds talks with PA Secretary General



Vincenzo Amendola and Roberto Montella

Vincenzo Amendola, Italy's Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, visited the OSCE PA's International Secretariat Tuesday for wide-ranging talks with Secretary General Roberto Montella, Deputy Secretary General Semyon Dzakhaev and other staff.

Accompanied by Italian Ambassador to Denmark Stefano Queirolo Palmas, Amendola raised a number of important issues with the PA Secretary General, including Mediterranean security concerns and migration. He highlighted the link between the refugee and migrant crisis and the broader security environment, noting that the OSCE's comprehensive security framework is well-suited to address these challenges.

Amendola stressed that Italy is a friend of the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly, saying that it wants to invest further in political mechanisms of conflict resolution, including parliamentary diplomacy. There is a strong need, he said, for a viable multilateral format to address common challenges, and the OSCE provides that format.

Secretary General Montella briefed Amendola on the OSCE PA's ongoing activities, including its launching of an Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, which is being chaired by Filippo Lombardi (MP, Switzerland). He also described the PA's recent seminar in Leinsweiler, Germany, as a success, providing an informal setting for parliamentarians – including some from countries affected by protracted conflicts – to discuss conflict resolution strategies.

Montella also described in detail his efforts since assuming the post of Secretary General in January to foster co-operation with other OSCE bodies, as well as to modernize the International Secretariat, in order to better serve PA Members and promote the relevance of the organization.

Other topics of discussion included Arctic issues, including the geopolitics of the region and the effects of climate change, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

International Secretariat staff in action this week from Georgia to Germany



Andreas Baker (left) at a meeting with the Georgian Central Election Commission, 26 April. (Photo courtesy of the CEC.)

Staff members from the International Secretariat are busy this week participating in a variety of events and activities, including an election Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) deployed by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and a working retreat of the OSCE's Human Dimension Committee.

Director of Elections Andreas Baker is in Tbilisi, Georgia, participating in the NAM ahead of parliamentary elections expected on 8 October 2016. Meetings are being held with election administration officials, political party representatives, media representatives and civil society, among others. Baker's participation in the NAM is intended to facilitate close co-operation with any election observation mission that may be deployed by ODIHR.

Deputy Director of Administration Marc Carillet participated in a two-day retreat of the OSCE's Human

Dimension Committee in Lower Austria on 26-27 April. The event was co-organized by the German OSCE Chairmanship and the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE and offered the possibility for representatives of participating States and OSCE Institutions to exchange views on a wide range of topics including the human rights of migrants, torture prevention, freedom of the media, reform of human dimension events and the rights of persons with disabilities.

The discussions served to prepare for the OSCE Ministerial Council to be held in Hamburg in December and offered an opportunity to highlight the PA's work being done in preparation for the Annual Session this summer. The report and draft resolution of Third Committee Rapporteur Gordana Comic were distributed to the Standing Committee Tuesday.

On Wednesday, OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle addressed a "Forum Peace and Security Politics," organized by the State Agency for Civic (Political) Education of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, in Coblenz, Germany. Together with a researcher from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt he made an extensive presentation on the current state of affairs in the OSCE. The Forum was entitled "Peace Force or Paper Tiger: Can today's OSCE create peace?"

Also this week, Farimah Daftary, Loic Poulain and Iryna Sabashuk from the Copenhagen office are in Vienna for the OSCE's General Orientation Programme.