

OSCE PA's 25th Annual Session set to begin in Tbilisi



An advance team of the OSCE PA International Secretariat, led by Deputy Secretaries General Gustavo Pallares and Semyon Dzakhaev and Head of Conference Services Odile Lelarge, is in Tbilisi finalizing preparations for the 25th Annual Session, set to begin this Friday. Culminating two years of advance work in making the Annual Session a reality, the team is holding meetings with staff of the Georgian Parliament and the ExpoGeorgia Exhibition Center, where the meeting will take place.

Held under the theme “25 Years of Parliamentary Co-operation: Building Trust Through Dialogue,” the Session will bring together nearly 300 members of parliament from around 50 countries to debate and adopt resolutions on some of today’s most pressing challenges in the areas of security, human rights, economics and the environment.

Debates are expected on the crisis in and around Ukraine, protracted conflicts in Georgia, fundamental freedoms in Crimea, the fight against corruption, the rights of refugees, climate change, terrorism, and lifting sanctions against parliamentarians. Other topics for debate include:

- Whether an international peacekeeping operation should be deployed to Ukraine in order to reinforce the Minsk Agreements
- The possible establishment of a high-level OSCE

co-ordinating body on migration

- Recent military escalation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone
- Enhancing OSCE early warning mechanisms to enable swifter action on international challenges
- Opening OSCE countries’ labour markets to migrants
- International co-ordination of law enforcement efforts to prevent child sexual exploitation

After the amendment process and their adoption by the committee, resolutions will be voted on by the full Assembly on the final day of the Annual Session on 5 July for inclusion in the OSCE PA’s Tbilisi Declaration, which will be presented to foreign ministers and speakers of parliament of the OSCE’s 57 participating States. Participants will also hold elections for the OSCE PA’s Bureau, including for the President of the Assembly. In addition, the PA’s Standing Committee will adopt the annual budget for the coming fiscal year.

A number of high-level officials are expected to address the opening plenary session on 1 July, including Georgian Speaker of Parliament David Usupashvili, Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili, Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland), and OSCE Chairman-in-Office and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

At the plenary sessions on 4 and 5 July, expected speakers include OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (MP, Canada), Treasurer Doris Barnett (MP, Germany), and Secretary General Roberto Montella.

For schedules, resolutions, live streaming during the event, press releases and other information, go to www.oscepa.org. Photos will be posted on the PA’s Flickr page at www.flickr.com/oscepa and the Secretariat will be tweeting from the @oscepa Twitter account with the hashtag #OSCEPATbilisi.

Parliamentarians describe OSCE PA’s migration work to OSCE’s governmental side

Several OSCE parliamentarians addressed a meeting of the OSCE’s Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows in Vienna on Monday. Describing the recent activities of the PA on the migration issue, members of the OSCE PA’s Ad Hoc Committee on Migration called for greater attention to the humanitarian impacts of the crisis and its root causes.

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Vice-Chair Makis Voridis (MP, Greece) stressed in his remarks the importance of prioritizing the protection of women and children, as well as tackling other humanitarian concerns. Vice-Chair Guglielmo Picchi (MP, Italy) noted the importance of addressing the underlying issues fueling the migration crisis. Marietta Tidei (MP, Italy), who serves as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and as Rapporteur of the OSCE PA’s Second

Committee, noted the need for the media to enhance its coverage of the crisis in a more balanced and constructive way. Head of the OSCE PA’s Norwegian Delegation Geir Joergen Bekkevold, who also serves on the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, noted that Europe must protect vulnerable groups.

The PA’s contribution to the working group session will be included in the findings to be presented at a special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on 20 July.



L-R: Claude Wild, Makis Voridis, Dunja Mijatovic. Vienna, 27 June