

Assembly participates in opening of the Austrian 2017 OSCE Chairmanship



Representatives of the OSCE PA participated last week in the opening of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship in Vienna, with Assembly President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria), Secretary General Roberto Montella, Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle and several other PA staff members holding meetings with counterparts from the Organization's governmental side.

Muttonen and Montella met with a number of officials to discuss areas of common interest between the parliamentary and governmental sides of the OSCE, including follow-up on outcomes of the recent Ministerial Council in Hamburg. President Muttonen expressed support, in particular, for OSCE field work and encouraged participating States to find consensus on the mandates of field operations across the OSCE area. Secretary General Montella held informal talks with OSCE officials and Permanent Representatives to discuss further strengthening co-operation between the PA

and the OSCE's executive structures.

On 13 January, PA staff members participated in various Regional Working Group sessions held in conjunction with the Chairmanship's opening. The PA was represented by staff members Maria Chepurina, who attended the Central Asia Working Group session; Marc Carillet, who participated in the Eastern Europe Working Group; Andreas Baker, who attended the South Caucasus Working Group session, and Amb. Nothelle and Francesco Pagani, who covered the South East Europe session. The PA representatives described the Assembly's work in various regional and thematic areas and reiterated the OSCE PA's support for the work of the OSCE field operations.

OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares met with OSCE representatives to discuss preparations for the PA's Winter Meeting, to be held at the Hofburg Congress Centre on 23-24 February. PA staff also used the opportunity in Vienna to discuss with President Muttonen upcoming Assembly activities, including several statutory meetings scheduled this year, a number of expected presidential visits, and possible election observation missions.

Winter Meeting deadline reminder

Delegations are kindly asked to register for the Winter Meeting by **24 January 2017**. Registration forms and other practical information can be found at www.oscepa.org.

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration members hold high-level meetings in Brussels and Geneva



Members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration met this week with officials in Brussels and Geneva as part of ongoing efforts to improve co-ordination between the multiple actors dealing with the refugee and migrant crisis on the ground. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, Swiss parliamentarian Filippo Lombardi, led the delegation, which consisted of ten other members.

The delegation met Monday and Tuesday with representatives of the European External Action Service, the European Commission, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, and the UN Refugee Agency. Members met, among others,

with Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, and Christine Beerli, Permanent Vice-President of the ICRC.

Meetings focused on current policies aimed at managing migration flows with particular attention on conditions of camps in Greece and other hotspots, the state of implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement, and the protection of unaccompanied minors. The EU's relocation mechanism was also touched upon, with interlocutors discussing reasons for its failure so far. Discussions aimed to identify possible areas of co-operation and suggestions for further commitments by the OSCE and the OSCE PA.

Members of the Committee heard from Lord Alf Dubs, (United Kingdom) who had recently visited camps in mainland Greece, and discussed the Committee's upcoming report to be delivered at the Annual Session in Minsk. Committee Chair Lombardi is expected to report on the Brussels and Geneva meetings at the OSCE PA's Winter Meeting next month.

The delegation was supported this week by OSCE PA Programme Officer Farimah Daftary.