

President Muttunen meets with leadership in Azerbaijan



Christine Muttunen meets with Ilham Aliyev on 8 September.
Photo: Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan

OSCE PA President Christine Muttunen (Austria) was in Baku on 8-9 September to meet with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov, Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov. Muttunen also met with members of Azerbaijan's Delegation to the OSCE PA, including Head of Delegation Bahar Muradova and OSCE PA Vice-President Azay Guliyev, as well as Azerbaijan's Commissioner for Human Rights Elmira Teymur. Conflict resolution, elections, human rights, and Azerbaijan's active involvement in the OSCE PA were high on the agenda of the bilateral discussions.

In meetings, President Muttunen emphasized the urgency of advancing the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, noting that a failure to do so would continue to take an unacceptable human toll as well as undermine peace, stability and economic development in the region as a whole.

"Resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be a priority for both the international community and local leaders," she said, noting that she would deliver the same message in Yerevan in the coming months. "There is no alternative to a peaceful political settlement of this conflict."

The President emphasized the OSCE PA's support for the mediation efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group and the activities of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, saying that greater political will and commitment will be required from all parties. She also expressed her regret that the OSCE no longer had a full-time presence in the country, but reiterated the Organization's interest in continued close co-operation.

President Muttunen stressed the value of intercultural and interreligious exchanges as complementary confidence-building measures in conflict resolution and also discussed the importance of effective observation of elections by the OSCE, expressing disappointment that this could not occur in recent years.

Muttunen's visit to Azerbaijan was her first to the country as OSCE PA President. Her visit is the first of a series of regional visits which would also include trips to Yerevan and Tbilisi. The PA's Special Representative on the South Caucasus, Bulgarian parliamentarian Kristian Vigenin, is also planning a visit to the region later this month. President Muttunen was accompanied by Loic Poulain from the International Secretariat and Lukas Mussi from the Austrian Parliament.

VP Tidei addresses Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw

OSCE PA Vice-President Marietta Tidei (Italy) spoke Monday at the opening session of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw. In her remarks, Tidei stressed the importance of dialogue and ensuring that integration measures are consistent with democratic ideals.

"We must recognize that one of the most challenging issues that our democracies will face in the coming years will be on the front of integration, on our ability not only to recognize and protect those running away from wars and poverty, but also to make these people feel like an integral part of our communities, with full rights and duties," said Tidei. "To this end, the importance of active dialogue with civil society by the OSCE, both in its governmental and parliamentary dimensions, must be underlined."

In addition to serving as Vice-President of the Assembly, Tidei is a member of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and previously served as Rapporteur of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.



Marietta Tidei speaking at the HDIM on 11 September.

The OSCE HDIM is taking place 11-22 September. With some 1,600 participants, the annual event provides an opportunity to review the progress made by governments in implementing their commitments in the fields of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions and governance, and tolerance and non-discrimination.

Joining Vice-President Tidei in Warsaw were OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and Chief of the Executive Office Andreas Baker. At the HDIM, Montella met with the new OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger and also with the newly appointed Heads of OSCE Institutions to discuss co-operation and upcoming activities.