

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA delegation, in Donbas and Kyiv, urges end to conflict, humanitarian relief



L-R: Petro Poroshenko, George Tsereteli, Ilkka Kanerva, Kent Harstedt and Ignacio Sanchez Amor. Kyiv, 14 May 2018

A delegation led by OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) wrapped up a visit to Ukraine on Tuesday. Starting last week in the Donbas region and concluding in Kyiv, the high-level delegation visited areas on the frontline in eastern Ukraine, witnessing first-hand the dire humanitarian situation and the impact of the continued fighting on civilians and infrastructure. The visit was facilitated by the Ukrainian parliament and the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (SMM) and included extensive briefings on the situation in the country.

The delegation called for urgent steps to alleviate the humanitarian situation of people impacted by the conflict, including by assisting the country in its efforts to ease the plight of up to two million internally displaced persons. The parliamentarians stressed the need for a UN peace-keeping mission to make full implementation of the Minsk Agreements possible.

Meetings were held in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, Deputy Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada Iryna Heraschenko, Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mykola Kuzio, and the Ukrainian OSCE PA Delegation led by Artur Gerasymov. The delegation also met with the SMM Chief Observer Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan and his Deputy

Aleska Simkic.

The OSCE PA delegation included former OSCE PA President and current Special Representative on Mediation, Ilkka Kanerva (Finland); the Chair of the OSCE PA's human rights and humanitarian affairs committee, Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain); and OSCE PA Special Representative on Eastern Europe, Kent Harstedt. From the International Secretariat, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle, Head of Administration for Election Observation Iryna Sabashuk, and Presidential Advisor Loic Poulain also participated.

"The OSCE PA stands steadfast in its solidarity with the people of Ukraine who face tragedies on a daily basis and are suffering under the consequences of Russia's ongoing military actions on Ukrainian territory," said President Tsereteli. "We have consistently called for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements to end this armed conflict, but one ceasefire after the other is broken. Without a lasting end of the armed clashes, the vicious cycle which prevents their implementation will not come to an end."

Support was also expressed for the work of the SMM, which Sanchez Amor noted is making "an enormous contribution, serving as a reliable point of contact for all people in the conflict region, and providing credible and detailed information to the international community." (Please see www.oscepa.org for more information on the PA's visit to Ukraine.)



Delegation members examine destruction in Slovyansk, 12 May

Voridis: parliamentary involvement needed to address returning foreign terrorist fighters



Makis Voridis addressing the OSCE-wide conference on FTFs in Rome, 10 May 2018

Speaking at an OSCE-wide conference in Rome on 10 May, Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) Makis Voridis (Greece) said that parliaments and international fora such as the PA have a vital role to play in shaping innovative legislation and policies to reduce threats posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters, or FTFs.

The OSCE PA is working to improve counter-terrorism legal frameworks while ensuring that policies respect fundamental freedoms, said Voridis.

"To reduce the threat posed by returning FTFs, we need to strengthen co-ordination and information-sharing channels at local, national, regional and international levels," he said.

Voridis was speaking at the conference "The Reverse Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs): Challenges for the OSCE Area and Beyond," organized by the Italian Chairmanship with support from the OSCE Transnational Threats Department. In addition to Voridis, CCT members Ignacio Cosido (Spain), Fatmir Mediu (Albania) and Abid Raja (Norway), as well as OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and Liaison Officer Marco Bonabello, attended the conference.