

South East Europe in focus at London seminar



Participants at London seminar on the Western Balkans, 28 June 2018.

Focused on the situation in South East Europe, a meeting of the European Leadership Network at the House of Lords in London last week featured the participation of a number of OSCE PA members, including OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia), Fatmir Mediu (Albania), Peter Bowness (United Kingdom), and Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom), as well as PA Secretary General Roberto Montella.

In his remarks, President Tsereteli said that to achieve their goals and objectives, the countries of South East Europe must concentrate on their common interests, stressing the importance of continuing reform efforts and strengthening democratic institutions. He noted that he visited Tirana at the end of May to reaffirm the OSCE's commitment to the region.

The President also described the OSCE PA's engagement, including recent activities such as the visit in early June to Bosnia and Herzegovina by members of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism. Members of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration were in Serbia from 10 to 12 June, he said, to learn more about how Serbia welcomes migrants and refugees, as well as the resources deployed to answer the needs of the unaccompanied minors.

Secretary General Montella said: "The fight in South East Europe is not between ethnic groups or nations, but between a very well organized and multiethnic crime and corruption network and those who support the rule of law."

He noted that the OSCE PA strongly supports every OSCE mission in South East Europe, which have performed invaluable work in advancing the region's democratic aspirations. The OSCE PA has been particularly engaged in the region through election observation, including in Albania last June, as well as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro in 2016. The PA also plans to observe elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina this autumn, the Secretary General said.

The topic of South East Europe will be discussed at the OSCE PA's 27th Annual Session, taking place in Berlin on 7-11 July.

OSCE PA and Bundestag staff finalize preparations for 27th Annual Session in Berlin

An advance team of the OSCE PA International Secretariat, led by Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and Head of Conference Services Odile Lelarge, is in Berlin finalizing preparations for the 27th Annual Session, set to begin on Saturday. The team has met with OSCE PA Treasurer and Head of the German Delegation Doris Barnett and is holding ongoing meetings with staff of the Bundestag, as well as the OSCE PA's team of language specialists continuing the translation of all documents and amendments. Other tasks include setting up IT networks and preparing offices and meeting rooms.

Held under the theme "Implementing OSCE Commitments: The Role of Parliaments," the Annual Session will be held in the Reichstag Building on 7-11 July. The largest event on the Assembly's calendar, the Annual Session consists of several



Conference team speaks with Doris Barnett, 3 July 2018.

days of meetings featuring high-level speeches and debates, and will culminate in the adoption of the Berlin Declaration and the election of Assembly officers.

The meeting is expected to include the participation of some 300 parliamentarians from North America, Europe and Asia.

OSCE PA SG Montella builds co-operation with OSCE counterparts in Vienna

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella met Monday with the Italian OSCE Chairmanship and OSCE Secretary General to exchange views on current security developments in Europe and to consolidate co-operation. Meeting with Italy's Deputy Permanent Representative to the OSCE in Vienna, Amb. Luca Fratini, Montella reiterated the PA's support to the Italian Chairmanship and discussed prospects for the 2018 Ministerial Council in Milan. Montella

praised the Italian efforts to revive co-operative dialogue amid heightened international tensions and reiterated the OSCE PA's readiness to complement relevant Chairmanship efforts.

During his meeting with OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, Montella welcomed the high level of trust and synergy achieved between the two Secretariats, which demonstrates how the OSCE parliamentary and executive structures can work together to promote security.