News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA's 17th Autumn Meeting opens in Bishkek

In addressing common challenges, closer collaboration is needed within the OSCE and with international partners, said participants at the opening of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 17th Autumn Meeting, taking place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 3-6 October. Parliaments play a key role in this regard, speakers said.

Speakers at the opening session Wednesday included President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Speaker of Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic Dastanbek Dzhumabekov, and PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia).

The meeting, attended by some 300 delegates including 160 OSCE parliamentarians, as well as the heads of OSCE field operations in Central Asia and a representative of the Chairmanship of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, is hosted by the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic.

President Tsereteli noted that a deterioration of trust in the OSCE has threatened the functioning of the organization, eroded dialogue, entrenched existing conflicts, and left unfulfilled the agreements that could bring an end to human suffering in conflict zones such as Ukraine or Georgia.

He pointed out that parliamentarians, along with civil society, have a key role to generate political will in support of the implementation of OSCE commitments. "We will continue to find new ways to draw on your expertise and work in a more inclusive manner in order to maximize our impact," he said.

In his remarks, President Jeenbekov noted that Kyrgyzstan has greatly benefited from its co-operation with the OSCE,

George Tsereteli delivers opening remarks in Bishkek, 3 Oct.

particularly in the development of its electoral system. He stressed that Kyrgyzstan continues to modernize its economy and implement political and judicial reforms. President Jeenbekov noted the importance of uniting against terrorism and stressed the unique ability of the OSCE to promote mutually agreed upon action.

Speaker Dzhumabekov said that Kyrgyzstan is firmly on the path of parliamentary democracy. He thanked international partners for contributing to democratic development and noted that the Jogorku Kenesh is the center of decision-making in the country, stressing that its goals of sustainable development are enhanced by legislative action.

The Autumn Meeting features a Parliamentary Conference which starts Thursday on the theme of "Promoting Security Dialogue in Central Asia and Beyond." The Mediterranean Forum also takes place Thursday on "Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Mediterranean: Addressing Migration, Trade and Environmental Challenges." The OSCE PA's Standing Committee of heads of national delegations meets Friday.

Voridis and Kauma to lead observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Makis Voridis

Pia Kauma

OSCE PA members Makis Voridis (Greece) and Pia Kauma (Finland) are arriving in Sarajevo this week to lead OSCE observers of Bosnia and Herzegovina's general elections on 7 October. Voridis was appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission, which will include up to 300 short-term

observers and is a joint endeavor with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). He will deliver the post-election statement at a press conference in Sarajevo on 8 October. PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) has appointed Kauma as Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observation mission. Twenty-one OSCE PA members are expected to observe the elections.

OSCE PA observers will deploy in Sarajevo and surroundings, Banja Luka, Mostar and other cities throughout the country. The observation mission is working closely with colleagues from PACE, the European Parliament, NATO PA and the OSCE/ODIHR. The OSCE/ODIHR long-term observers are led by Head of Mission Ambassador Peter Tejler.

The PA has previously observed Bosnia and Herzegovina parliamentary and presidential elections in 1996, municipal elections in 1997, parliamentary elections in 2008 and 2010, and general elections in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014.