

# News from Copenhagen

## Leinsweiler seminar explores economic drivers of conflict and co-operation



Participants of the fifth OSCE PA Leinsweiler seminar, 4 May.

Some 20 OSCE parliamentarians from 10 countries met on 4-5 May in the state of Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany, for the fifth OSCE PA Leinsweiler seminar focused on the power of economics as an instrument of conflict prevention and rehabilitation – or as a source of conflict. OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Treasurer Doris Barnett (Germany) opened the seminar noting that European stability is rooted in economic ties, which is a lesson that was learned through the painful experiences of the 20th century. Tsereteli noted that the venue of the meeting is a powerful reminder of how economic competition has fueled conflicts, but how economic co-operation has helped forged peace.

Barnett, who heads the German Delegation to the OSCE PA, recalled the motivation for establishing strong economic foundations for co-operation. She noted that following the Second World War, the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community were established to unite European countries economically and politically. Also addressing the opening was Amb. Katarina Zakova, Deputy Permanent Representative from the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship, who spoke about the importance of effective multilateralism.

The seminar was hosted by the Delegation of Germany to the OSCE PA with the support of the German Foreign Ministry, and included the participation of OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and the OSCE PA's Special Representative in Vienna Amb. Andreas Nothelle, as well as representatives from the governmental side of the OSCE, including Amb. Vuk Zagic, the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and Amb. Kairat Sarybay, Chair of the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Committee. Other participants included leading academics, representatives of regional organizations and of the private sector.

In discussions, participants raised issues such as connectivity and energy security. In several sessions, the resilience of transborder economic co-operation after conflicts, or even during the Cold War, was presented as an encouraging signal to the populations most affected by current conflicts.

Previous Leinsweiler seminars have been held in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

## North Macedonia's election well run but legal gaps remain, observers say



Sereine Mauborgne delivers the post-election statement in Skopje, 6 May.

The second round of North Macedonia's presidential election was calm and well run, but shortfalls in the legal framework continued to be a concern, observers concluded in a statement issued in Skopje on Monday.

"Yesterday's increased voter turnout shows determination by the population to unite and address the challenges facing this country," said the OSCE PA's Sereine Mauborgne, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. "It is now up to the political leadership to hear this message and undertake real reform that will replace the legal patchwork requiring constant political agreements with a coherent and sustainable electoral law."

The election authorities carried out preparations for the second round professionally and impartially, and generally enjoyed public confidence, observers said. However, the fact that citizens whose identification documents had expired were excluded from voting needs to be addressed. In addition, while the turnout requirement of 40 per cent was met on this occasion, it does create the potential for repeat elections, a concern that ODIHR has previously voiced.

The campaign took place in a calm environment. All participants were able to campaign without hindrance and fundamental freedoms were respected. State officials appeared to continue differentiating clearly between their official and political activities. Further, both candidates reached out to different ethnic communities.

As in the first round, however, the international observers expressed serious concerns over the legal framework. While the law does allow for democratic elections, the regulatory gaps already evident on issues such as campaigning, media advertising, campaign finance and voter registration remain unaddressed. Following the public presentation of the preliminary statement, Mauborgne, together with the Heads of PACE and ODIHR teams, met with Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov, to discuss the conclusions.

The election observation mission comprised some 170 observers from 32 countries, including 156 deployed by ODIHR, 11 MPs and staff from the OSCE PA, and five from PACE. The OSCE PA delegation was supported by Andreas Baker and Iryna Sabashuk from the International Secretariat.