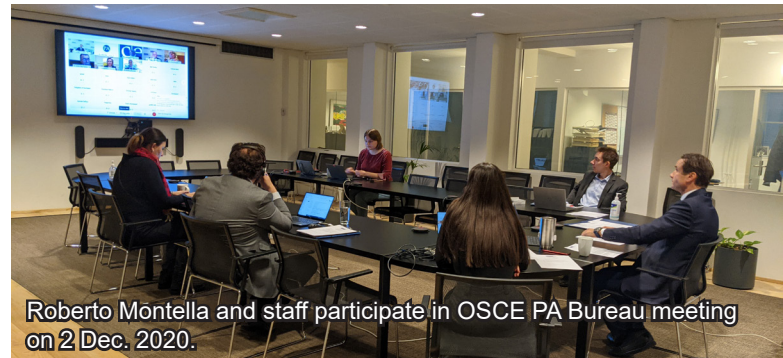


OSCE PA leaders meet on the eve of the OSCE's 27th Ministerial Council

The OSCE PA's Bureau met virtually Wednesday on the eve of the OSCE's 27th Ministerial Council for discussions on OSCE-related work. Moderated by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, the meeting featured an address by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Albanian Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Edi Rama, and Assembly President George Tsereteli (Georgia). OSCE PA Vice-President Lord Peter Bowness (United Kingdom), who serves as Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Working Practices, presented a report on consideration of new provisions to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Rama stressed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy particularly during times of crisis. He noted that the Albanian Chairmanship has been dominated by the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and has adapted through the use of virtual and hybrid meetings to ensure that discourse continues, noting that 2020 has also been characterized by several other crises including conflicts flaring up in the OSCE region and failure to reach consensus on the four top leadership positions in the OSCE. He also focused on the achievements of the OSCE in responding to the challenges of the past year, particularly in making a difference on the ground, implementing commitments and building stability through dialogue.

Tsereteli spoke about the priorities of his presidency, which he noted is likely coming to an end soon due to results of recent parliamentary elections in Georgia. He highlighted efforts made towards streamlining the activities of the Assembly and ensuring that it remains committed to upholding core values of the OSCE. He pointed to the As-



sembly's Special Representatives who are focusing on issues ranging from civil society to disinformation to corruption as examples of the Assembly's ability to open new areas of work and expertise.

In the discussion, Bureau members expressed gratitude for the leadership provided by President Tsereteli, raised points about the need to focus on resolving conflicts in the OSCE area and highlighted activities and Assembly priorities for 2021.

Bowness discussed proposed rules changes with a focus on the necessity of implementing emergency provisions to ensure that remote voting procedures are in place for electing the President and other Assembly Officers in case the PA is not able to meet physically in 2021. The proposed emergency provisions would be put to a vote at the Standing Committee meeting in February. Deputy Secretary General Andreas Notherle elaborated on the possibilities for elections and political decision-making provisions. Bureau members welcomed the proposals and emphasized the importance of full transparency with all PA delegations in presenting the changes.

President to address MC, side event to present the "OSCE Call for Action: Reaffirming a Common Purpose" initiative

President Tsereteli will address the opening of the Ministerial Council Thursday morning and the PA will hold a side event on the margins of the meeting, entitled "OSCE Call for Action: Reaffirming a Common Purpose." The side event will take place on 3 December at 13:30 and will livestream on the PA's YouTube channel and at www.oscepa.org.

President Tsereteli addresses OSCE ambassadors, highlights Assembly work

OSCE PA President George Tsereteli addressed ambassadors at last week's Permanent Council meeting in Vienna, stressing that the OSCE must reach its potential to help build a safer and more stable future.

"As we scan all around the OSCE region, despite the good work that the organization has done on the ground, in particular in the field presences, but also in the politico-military dimension, it seems that several participating States have largely failed to live up to this pledge," he said on 26 November. The outbreak of war over Nagorno-Karabakh has been a painful reminder of the urgency in resolving conflicts, he said, noting that it is important to also keep attention focused on other conflicts in the OSCE region.

Tsereteli informed the ambassadors of the outcomes of the PA's series of Parliamentary Web Dialogues this year, as well as its efforts to resume election observation activities after a hiatus in the spring and summer due to the pandemic. With observers deployed to Montenegro at the end of August, and more recently to Georgia and the United States,

he noted that the PA also plans to observe upcoming elections in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. "The readiness of our parliamentarians to actively take part in these missions is yet another reminder of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's dedication to help governments live up to their human rights commitments," he said.

Looking ahead to the Ministerial Council on 3-4 December, Tsereteli pointed out that given the multiplicity of challenges the OSCE has been entrusted with, it is urgent that foreign ministers come together and provide decisive leadership to fully enable the organization to accomplish its mission.

In the question and answer session, ambassadors expressed appreciation for the Assembly's work in a number of areas, including the attention it pays to people in conflict zones, gender issues, and its efforts to build dialogue within Belarus between the government and the opposition. The PA's role as a platform for mutual respectful and constructive dialogue on pressing issues facing the OSCE was noted, as well as its role in promoting adherence to international commitments.