

News from Copenhagen

Washington Declaration Adopted, President Hastings Re-Elected



At the close of the 14th Annual Session on July 5, the Assembly unanimously re-elected US Congressman Alcee L. Hastings for another one-year term as President of the Assembly. President Hastings stressed that he would continue working for the development of the Parliamentary Assembly as a reliable partner contributing to the success of the OSCE.

Senator Jerahmiel Grafstein (Canada) was also re-elected unanimously for a third term as Treasurer of the Assembly, after reporting that the Assembly had received a favourable report from its external auditors for the 12th year in a row.

On the opening day of the Session the Standing Committee of the Assembly took the decision to reappoint Secretary General R. Spencer Oliver for another five year term.

The Heads of Delegation voted by a large majority, extending Spencer Oliver's leadership of the International Secretariat. The Standing Committee also voted, on the basis of consensus-less-one, to approve Spencer Oliver's appointment of Tina Schøn as Deputy Secretary General. Ms. Schøn is the first woman to hold such a senior position in the Assembly's Secretariat.

The Assembly also elected three Vice-Presidents:

Oleh Bilorus (Ukraine)

Pia Christmas-Møller (Denmark)

Barbara Haering (Switzerland)

Officers of the three General Committees were also elected in Washington:

First General Committee

Chair: Göran Lennmarker (Sweden)

Vice-Chair: Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco)

Rapporteur: Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria)

Second General Committee

Chair: Benjamin L. Cardin (USA)

Vice-Chair: Leonid Ivanchenko (Russia)

Rapporteur: Roland Blum (France)

Third General Committee

Chair: Claudia Nolte (Germany)

Vice-Chair: Cecilia Wigström (Sweden)

Rapporteur: Anne-Marie Lizin (Belgium)

Following the adoption of the Washington Declaration by the Assembly on July 5, the Document will be forwarded to the governments of all OSCE participating States, as well as partner States and international parliamentary institutions and other international organizations. The Declaration will be distributed to all OSCE PA Delegations, Speakers of Parliaments, and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as to the national delegations to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna.

The Session was devoted to the theme of '30 Years Since Helsinki: Challenges Ahead', and the Declaration reiterates the fundamental principles endorsed by the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and other OSCE agreements. It includes recommendations on political affairs, economic and environmental development and respect for human rights.

The final document supports recommendations on reform, based on reports by the OSCE Panel of Eminent Persons and on the OSCE PA's colloquium on 'The Future of the OSCE'. The Assembly also calls upon the OSCE to improve the gender balance in the organization and to adopt more transparency and accountability in its working methods.

In their resolutions, the parliamentarians also proposed recommendations on combating anti-Semitism, as well as on trafficking in human beings. Proposals on finding peaceful resolutions to frozen conflicts in Abkhazia (Georgia) and Transdniestria were also supported by the Assembly.

The Final Declaration, as well as further information on all activities of the Assembly can be found at www.oscepa.org.