

## OSCE PA Holds Fall Meetings in Portoroz



Roberto Battelli (left), Goran Lenmarker (centre), and Josep Borrell, in Portoroz

From 29 September to 1 October, parliamentarians from across the OSCE met in Portoroz, Slovenia, for the Assembly's annual Fall Meetings. The meetings consisted of a conference, a meeting of the Standing Committee, and a Forum on the Mediterranean.

The parliamentary conference, organized within the Parliamentary Troika of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, focused on 'Security Through Co-operation in South East Europe: The Role of Parliamentarians'. OSCE PA President Goran Lenmarker opened the Conference, stressing the importance of inter-parliamentary dialogue and the role of MPs in ensuring

long-lasting security in the region. The opening session was also addressed by France Cukjati, the Speaker of the Slovenian National Assembly; Josep Borrell, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office; Matjaz Sinkovec, State Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Roberto Battelli, Head of the Slovenian Delegation to the OSCE PA and Special Representative on South East Europe. The Conference also included sessions on: Decentralization and Local Government in South East Europe; Education as a Basis for Security: Knowing Your Neighbour; and Regional Co-operation in Energy Security.

The Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations heard reports from President Lenmarker, Treasurer Hans Raidel and Secretary General Spencer Oliver. The Committee was also briefed by the OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut on the OSCE budget. The OSCE Secretary General stressed that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, one of the original OSCE Institutions established by the Charter of Paris, is "vital for the OSCE". The Standing Committee also confirmed the appointment of Gustavo Pallares of Spain as Deputy Secretary General of the OSCE PA.

On Monday 1 October, parliamentarians focused attention on the OSCE Mediterranean Dimension, and particularly on Minority Protection and Non-Discrimination in the Mediterranean.

## Tingsgard: Ukrainian Elections Open and Competitive – Political Forces Must now Deliver

Delivering the OSCE statement on the September 30 parliamentary elections in Ukraine, OSCE PA Vice-President Tone Tingsgard announced: "Despite difficult circumstances, these elections were conducted in a positive and professional manner. The high turnout on election day was the Ukrainian people's contribution to overcoming the political crisis. It is now the turn of the political forces to deliver."

Ms. Tingsgard, appointed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, to deliver the OSCE statement was speaking at a press conference in Kyiv, 1 October.

The parliamentary elections in Ukraine were conducted mostly in line with international commitments and standards for democratic elections and confirm an open and competitive environment for the conduct of election processes, concluded the mission. Voters had a diverse choice of candidates and parties and the fundamental freedoms of assembly and expression were respected. However, recent amendments to the law adopted as



Tone Tingsgard observes the sealing of ballot boxes, in Kyiv

a part of a compromise to end the political crisis, impacted negatively on the election process.

The International Election Observation Mission was a joint undertaking of the OSCE, comprising the OSCE PA and the OSCE/ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

The OSCE PA delegation, which was also led by First Committee Vice-Chair Consiglio Di Nino who served as Deputy Head of Delegation, was fully briefed in the two days prior to the election, and was deployed throughout Ukraine for election day. In addition to Kyiv and the surrounding regions, OSCE PA participants observed in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Odessa, Crimea, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv regions.

From the International Secretariat the delegation was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn, Programme / Press Officer Andreas Baker, Programme Officer Anna Chernova, and Research Assistant Danny Rees.