OSCE PA Bureau meets in Athens to prepare for next year

The Bureau of the OSCE PA met in connection with the 17th Ministerial Council, with PA Vice-President Petros Efthymiou welcoming the participants to Athens.

In the meeting of the Assembly’s leadership on 30 November, members dealt with a series of issues. President Joao Soares, Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Treasurer Roberto Battelli all reported on their activities since the last ordinary Bureau meeting in April in Lisbon, and on the Assembly’s budget for next year.

The Bureau also discussed preparations for meetings in 2010, including the Winter Meeting in February in Vienna, the next Bureau meeting in Copenhagen in April, the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum proposed by Kazakhstan for Almaty in May, and the 19th Annual Session in Oslo in July.

Also addressing the Bureau were the Alternate Foreign Minister of Greece, Dimitris Droutsas, and Kazakh Foreign Minister, incoming Chairman-in-Office, Kanat Saudabayev.

In his address, Mr. Saudabayev pledged that Kazakhstan will continue the efforts of the Greek Chairmanship in initiating discussions about all aspects of OSCE commitments. In addition, he announced his decision to extend the mandate of PA Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen as Special Representative of the Kazakh Chairmanship on Election Monitoring.

The Foreign Minister also stated that Kazakhstan greatly values the PA’s contribution to election observation. “We highly appreciate the work of members of parliament in the course of monitoring elections,” he said, “and we act in favor of the maximum use of their valuable experience in this area.”