

OSCE PA observing elections in United Kingdom

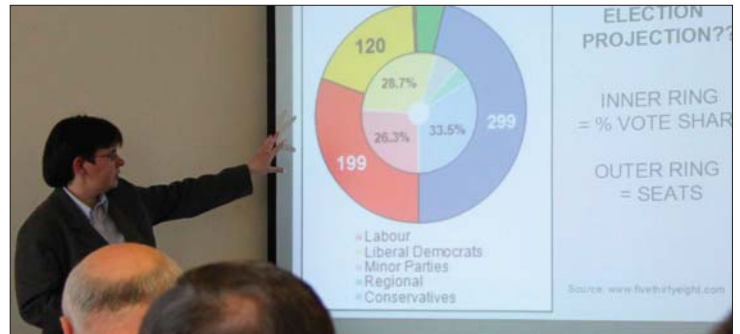


President Soares listens to a briefing by Ruth Fox of the Hansard Society

As part of its observation of the general elections in the United Kingdom on Thursday, 6 May, the OSCE PA delegation was briefed for several days in London by officials from the Electoral Commission and the Library of the House of Commons, representatives from the major political parties and the media, as well as the independent political research group, the Hansard Society.

The intensive briefings provided an opportunity to examine differences between the UK's first-past-the-post system and the proportional election systems used by many OSCE countries. The parliamentarians are focusing their election day observations in the London and Manchester regions. In Manchester, the delegation met with Tony Lloyd, head of the UK's delegation to the OSCE PA.

President Joao Soares has been appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, as Special Co-ordinator to lead the OSCE short-term observers. He is also leading the Assembly's delegation, which consists of parliamentarians and staff from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Russia and Tajikistan.



This is the first time that the PA has deployed an observation mission consisting of a majority of parliamentarians from the Commonwealth of Independent States.

It is also the first time the British government has invited the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to observe a British election and follows the UK's 2006 Electoral Administration Act, which specifically introduced provisions for observers to be accredited to attend polling stations and the vote count.

"There are 55 parliaments in the OSCE as well as 55 different electoral systems," said Secretary General Spencer Oliver as the Assembly prepared to deploy its observation mission. "The opportunity to observe the British first-past-the-post system provides our multinational observer team an excellent opportunity to compare this system with the many other systems we have observed during the more than 100 election observation missions the OSCE PA has deployed during the past 17 years."

The parliamentary delegation is supported by Secretary General Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen, and Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker.

Migliori addresses Montenegro session on organized crime

Riccardo Migliori, Rapporteur of the First Committee and Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA, participated in a joint session of the Central European Initiative Parliamentary Dimension Committee and the IX Cetinje Parliamentary Forum in Cetinje, Montenegro on 26-27 April 2010. The session's topic was "The Role of Parliaments in Combating Corruption and Organized Crime."

Invited by the Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament, Ranko Krivokapic, Mr. Migliori reminded the participants in a speech that the fight against organized crime is the OSCE PA's theme for 2010, with both the Annual Session in Oslo and the Palermo Fall Meetings focusing on the issue.

Mr. Migliori also reminded participants ten years after the adoption of the Palermo UN Protocol of the importance that all participating States ratify the Palermo Treaty, which underlines the will of the International Community to provide a global solution to the global challenge posed by organized crime. Mr. Migliori said that the objective of parliamentarians

must be to harmonize national laws in order to have a transnational instrument in the fight against this global threat. He commended the countries of South East Europe for recently adopting new legislation on the seizure of assets, based on the model of the Italian legislation.

The PA delegation was supported by Roberto Montella, Programme Officer at the Vienna Liaison Office.



Ranko Krivokapic and Riccardo Migliori