

News from Copenhagen

OSCE Parliamentarians to convene 20th Annual Session in Belgrade

Members of Parliament from more than 50 OSCE countries are expected to meet at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session next week under the theme of "Strengthening the OSCE's Effectiveness and Efficiency – A New Start After the Astana Summit."

Members will vote on three committee resolutions and 26 supplementary items covering Mediterranean political transition, cyber security, human organ trafficking, food security, disaster planning, and nuclear safety among other issues. The parliamentarians will consider 159 amendments to the resolutions.

"In a world with ever changing threats to security and human rights, the Parliamentary Assembly has been a leader in encouraging the OSCE to act openly and transparently in addressing regional concerns," said Assembly President Petros Efthymiou.

If asked, the OSCE should provide assistance in the fields

of democracy and human rights in North Africa, according to a resolution that will be debated in the Assembly's Committee on Political Affairs and Security.

A resolution before the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment stresses the need to plan energy infrastructure mindful of environmental threats and nuclear safety.

The Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions will consider a resolution that calls for regular meetings between civil society representatives and ambassadors to the

Vienna-based OSCE.

The Annual Session will conclude 10 July with the election of Assembly Officers and the adoption of the Belgrade Declaration, which helps shape OSCE and national policy. All reports and draft resolutions are available at the Assembly's website, www.oscepa.org.



SG Oliver meets with election officials in Moscow



Vladimir Churov meeting with Spencer Oliver and Alexander Kozlovskiy



Mr. Oliver meets with Vladimir Ryzhkov

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver met with Russian Central Election Commission Chairman Vladimir Churov 28 June in Moscow to discuss modalities for the observation of the Russian parliamentary elections to take place on 4 December.

The OSCE PA has observed every Russian parliamentary election since 1993. In 2007, when OSCE/ODIHR chose not to observe due to numerical limitations placed on their proposed observation mission, the OSCE PA and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe rejected the limitations and observed the elections.

Mr. Oliver received assurances from Chairman Churov that there would be no limitations on the number of international observers from the OSCE PA or ODIHR for the parliamentary elections in December.

Parliamentary Assembly Vice-President Alexander Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation) also participated in the meeting at the CEC where Chairman Churov showed the latest electronic voting machines that will be deployed for the

first time this year in 6,000 voting locations.

When Mr. Oliver raised the question of the recent disqualification of the People's Freedom Party (PARNAS), Mr. Churov said that was not a matter for the CEC but for the Ministry of Justice.

While in Moscow, Mr. Oliver also met with Vladimir Ryzhkov, a co-leader of PARNAS and former Deputy Speaker of the State Duma. Mr. Ryzhkov indicated his party had worked to organize across the nation and had fully complied with registration laws. The Ministry of Justice, however, refused the party's registration last week based on arbitrary findings of minor, technical flaws in the registration papers.

Mr. Ryzhkov said the disqualification of the party would make the December elections a farce since there would be no real competition for the ruling United Russia Party. Mr. Oliver, accompanied by Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhaev, informed Mr. Ryzhkov that the Russian government was required to fulfill its international obligations under the 1990 Copenhagen Document related to elections.