

# News from Copenhagen

## President Efthymiou meets with Ukrainian Leaders

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Petros Efthymiou travelled to Kyiv last week for high-level meetings aimed at strengthening parliamentary relationships and supporting democratic institutions in Ukraine.

The two days of meetings starting 14 September came at the invitation of Volodymyr Lytvyn, the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament.

President Efthymiou also met with President Viktor Yanukovich, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, Deputy Foreign Minister Pavel Klimkin, and heads of various parties in the parliament, including the delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In all meetings President Efthymiou saluted the active role Ukraine has played in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, particularly through the Ukrainian Delegation led by Oleh Bilorus.

He also commended the work of Serhiy Shevchuk, who was recently elected Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment.

Mr. Efthymiou expressed optimism about Ukraine serving as Chair-in-Office of the OSCE in 2013.

Referring to the Belgrade Declaration adopted at the 2011 Annual Session, President Efthymiou underlined that the Organization should

focus on strengthening its effectiveness and efficiency to address rule of law in all the participating States.

“The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly can be a partner for progress,” he said. “Our members are always ready



*President Petros Efthymiou with Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Volodymyr Lytvyn.*

to engage with one another. We all benefit from sharing experiences from our own parliaments. Beyond this visit, I look forward to working closely with authorities and political parties in Ukraine to further strengthen Ukraine's democratic structures.”

During his meetings and public appearances, President Efthymiou mentioned the current situation involving opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko.

He repeated his statement of 11 August in which he called for the Ukrainian authorities

to “exercise the fullest degree of transparency in this prosecution” and respect the rule of law.

President Efthymiou also visited the OSCE Office of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine where he received a briefing from Amb. Lubomir Kopaj regarding the work of the OSCE in the country.

Mr. Efthymiou was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhiev from the International Secretariat and Giorgos Champouris from the Hellenic Parliament.

## Human rights chair speaks in Brussels

OSCE PA Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions Chair Matteo Mecacci (Italy) participated in a meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament 19 September in Brussels.

Mr. Mecacci spoke about the EU Parliament Annual Report on Human Rights in the World and called for the EU and OSCE to enhance their commitments to human rights as “the foundation of democratic institutions.”

“The expectations of people oppressed by authoritarian regimes should be appropriately met by organizations like ours,” Mr. Mecacci said. “We should claim the right of citizens to freely express their dissent and assert the duty of the international community to act and protect civilians in compliance with ‘Responsibility to Protect’ principles adopted by the United Nations.”



*President Efthymiou with President Yanukovich of Ukraine.*