

News from Copenhagen

Picula, Migliori lead pre-election visit to Georgia



Riccardo Migliori, with Spencer Oliver, Tonino Picula and Roberto Montella, speaks to the press in Tbilisi.

Leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly recently conducted a three-day visit to Georgia aimed at assessing the country's pre-election climate.

Vice-President Tonino Picula (Croatia), appointed by the OSCE Chair-in-Office to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission, led the delegation, which included OSCE PA President Riccardo Migliori (Italy), Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Director of Presidential Administration Roberto Montella.

The delegation met on 20-22 Aug. with a wide range of stakeholders in the upcoming election, including the

authorities, opposition parties, election administrators, representatives of the media and civil society, as well as members of the international community in Tbilisi.

"The upcoming Parliamentary elections are of great importance for the future of democracy in Georgia," Picula said at the conclusion of the visit. "We appreciate having this time to speak with people at all levels in Georgian society this week and welcome obvious pre-election efforts that aimed to ensure accuracy of the voters' list, provide transparency in campaign finance, and expand media accessibility throughout the country." He noted however "several issues that concern us and that we will continue to watch closely," including "the practice of certain law enforcement institutions in Georgia."

President Migliori added, "In the final weeks of this campaign I hope the Georgian authorities commit to a credible election and help create a level playing field for all parties that includes access to media and the protection of journalists whose work is essential for voters to make a free and informed choice on election day."

Norwegian delegation conducts field visit to Tajikistan



Shukurjon Zuhurov and Akhtar Chaudhry

Six members of the Norwegian OSCE PA delegation, led by Norway's Head of Delegation Akhtar Chaudhry, recently visited Tajikistan.

The visit was organized by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, headed by

Ivar Vikki, and included meetings with high-level political

leaders of the country. President Emomali Rakhmon, Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi, and Chairman of the Assembly of Representatives (the Majlisi Namoyandagon) Shukurjon Zuhurov all met with the delegation, discussing issues including democratization and human rights, border security, the fight against terrorism and the drug trade, and women's empowerment.

Meetings were also held with the Tajik OSCE PA delegation and members of the parliamentary Committee on International Affairs, as well as representatives of civil society and non-ruling parties in parliament.

Migliori addresses Arctic Council

Speaking today at the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Assembly President Riccardo Migliori reiterated the OSCE PA's support for the leading role of the Arctic Council in addressing Arctic issues and the importance of involving indigenous peoples in these policy discussions.

Migliori pointed out that an OSCE PA resolution adopted at the 2010 Annual Session in Oslo declared that the Law of the Seas is the basis for Arctic Ocean governance. "I urge those whose countries have not yet to ratified this treaty to do so this year," the president said. "So long as the sea is our common responsibility, we need common laws to guide our co-operation."

During his visit, Migliori is meeting with the president of the Icelandic Parliament (the Althing), Asta Ragnheidur Johannesdottir.

Deadlines reminder

Delegates are kindly reminded of the following registration deadlines for upcoming election observation missions.

- Belarus Parliamentary Elections on 23 September
Deadline: **7 September**
- Montenegro Parliamentary Elections on 14 October
Deadline: **14 September**
- Georgia Parliamentary Elections on 1 October
Deadline: **17 September**
- United States General Elections on 6 November
Deadline: **9 October**
- Ukraine Parliamentary Elections on 28 October
Deadline: **11 October**

Delegations that have not yet registered for the Fall Meetings in Tirana, to be held 5-7 October, are kindly asked to do so as soon as possible.