

## OSCE PA opens Romanian election observation mission



Vice-President Wolfgang Grossruck, President of the Permanent Election Authority Ana Maria Pătru, Special Rep. Andreas Notelle and Secretary of Austrian Delegation Lukas Mussli.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly launched its observation of the 9 December parliamentary elections in Bucharest with a pre-electoral visit this week by Vice-President Wolfgang Grossruck. The observation mission opened on Monday with the arrival of Senior Advisor Andreas Baker.

Accompanied by OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle, Grossruck met Wednesday with the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament, Valeriu Zgonea, the Vice Minister for Administration in the Romanian Ministry of the Interior, members of the Permanent Election Authority as well as the Central Election Commission, high-level politicians and representatives of the international community in Romania.

“After heated political debate this summer, I am pleased to see the preparations for the elections proceeding smoothly. We will continue to carefully monitor all developments,” said Vice-President Grossruck today.

An experienced election observer, Grossruck has led a number of short-term OSCE observer missions, most recently to Azerbaijan in November 2010. OSCE PA President Riccardo Migliori decided to establish a limited election observation

mission including members of the OSCE PA’s Standing Committee of Heads of Delegation, and appointed Grossruck on 31 October to lead the mission. Parliamentarians from 11 countries are expected to participate.

This is the sixth election observation mission that the OSCE PA has organized in the past two months. Nearly 300 parliamentarians have participated in these missions, including nine Bureau members. Since 1993, the OSCE PA has deployed 4,090 parliamentarians to observe elections across the OSCE area. Grossruck has participated in more than 20 of these missions over the years.

In October Migliori met in Bucharest with the President of Romania’s Senate, Crin Antonescu, Speaker Zgonea, and the Head of Romania’s Parliamentary Delegation to the OSCE PA, Cristian Radulescu. In addition to discussing parliamentary co-operation within the framework of the OSCE, the frozen conflict in Transdniestria, and the state of affairs in the basins of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the meetings focused on institutional tensions that have emerged in the country over the past year and how they could be affected by the upcoming elections.



Meeting with Speaker Valeriu Zgonea.

## Preparations for Istanbul Annual Session

On 20-22 November members of the PA’s International Secretariat visited Istanbul to continue working with the staff of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in preparation for the PA’s 2013 Annual Session. Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhaev and Conference Co-ordinator Odile Lelarge held intensive meetings with the senior staff of the parliament, preparing all logistical and practical issues related to the session. Istanbul meets all the requirements for hosting the session and preparations are proceeding in a timely and efficient manner, staff reported.

The Turkish Parliament is doing everything possible to ensure a smooth and productive session next year. The 22nd Annual Session of the OSCE PA will be held from **29 June to 3 July** in the Lutfi Kirdar Congress Centre of Istanbul hosted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. All practical information pertaining to the Session will be distributed prior to the Assembly’s Winter Meeting in Vienna in February.

## Assembly welcomes Mongolia to OSCE

OSCE PA President Riccardo Migliori welcomed last week the parliament of Mongolia as the newest country to join the Assembly.

“I warmly congratulate you on Mongolia becoming the 57th participating State of the OSCE,” Migliori wrote in a letter to Speaker Zandaakhuu Enkhbold of the Mongolian Parliament. “We also very much look forward to working with Mongolia, as we continue to address the many transnational security challenges across the OSCE PA region.”

President Migliori has expressed an interest in visiting Ulaanbaatar in early 2013 to discuss how the parliament can play a more active role in the Assembly through the various meetings and election observation missions led by parliamentarians throughout the year. The OSCE PA’s Bureau will decide in Dublin on 5 December how many seats Mongolia will receive in the plenary of the Assembly, which currently has 320 voting members from 55 participating States.