

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

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PA participates in Swiss OSCE Chairmanship Opening in Vienna



Left to right: OSCE Chairman-in-Office Didier Burkhalter, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatovic, and OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was represented at the opening of the OSCE Swiss Chairmanship in Vienna last week by President Ranko Krivokapic, Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Special Representative Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, Programme Director Anna Chernova, and several other members of the PA staff.

The President and Secretary General attended a working breakfast with the new OSCE Chairman-in-Office, H.E. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and his team. On the invitation of the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre, Ambassador Adam Kobieracki, Secretary General Oliver participated in the meeting of the Chairman-in-Office and Heads of Field Operations and Institutions.

PA staff from the Copenhagen and Vienna offices represented the Assembly during the four regional Working Group sessions, with Ms. Chernova covering the session on Central Asia, Ambassador Nothelle and Francesco Pagani covering South Eastern Europe, Director of Presidential Administration Roberto Montella covering the South Caucasus, and Deputy Director of Administration Marc Carillet covering Eastern Europe.

Deputy Secretary General Pallares and Secretary General Oliver also attended Working Group meetings. The PA's new Communications Director Richard Solash met with the communications team of the OSCE and attended Working Group sessions. President Krivokapic took part in the working breakfast along with Secretary General Oliver and other heads of OSCE Institutions, and attended the opening speech of the Chairman-in-Office.

Deputy Secretary General Pallares took the opportunity to prepare the work of the Assembly for the upcoming Winter Meeting, to be held on 13-14 February. Meeting with a representative of the OSCE CPC, Pallares discussed the debate on the theme "Parliamentary Control of Armed and Security Forces: Ensuring Transparency at the National and International Levels," which will be held during the meeting of the First General Committee.

The Winter Meeting will be comprised of meetings of the Standing Committee of Heads of Delegations, each General Committee, and joint sessions of the three committees. The topic for the special debate, to be held on 14 February, is "Rise of Extremism, Radicalism and Xenophobia: Challenges for the OSCE Region."

The opening session of the Winter Meeting will be addressed by President Krivokapic and Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Parliament. Heads of OSCE Institutions have been invited to address relevant meetings of the General Committees, with several speakers already confirmed. In the First Committee, PA Members will hear from Ambassador Dominic Shroeder, Chair of the OSCE Security Committee; Ambassador Adam Kobieracki, Director of the OSCE CPC; Lt. Col. Detlef Hempel, FSC Co-ordinator for the Code of Conduct; and Col. Presenjit Chaudhuri, from the Swiss Armed Forces.

The Second Committee will be addressed by Ambassador Olga Algayerova, Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee, and Dr. Halil Yurdukul Yigitguden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Dr. Yigitguden will introduce the debate on co-operation in water management in the OSCE area.

Confirmed speakers for the Third Committee include OSCE Human Dimension Committee Chair Robert Kvile, ODIHR Director Janez Lenarcic and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic. On Thursday, 13 February, the Austrian Parliament will host a gala reception for all participants of the Winter Meeting.



Spencer Oliver speaks with Heidi Grau, Head of the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship Task Force.