

Battelli and Tidei lead observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Roberto Battelli and Marietta Tidei are interviewed outside a polling station in Sarajevo, 12 October 2014.

In a statement delivered on behalf of the OSCE at a press conference in Sarajevo on Monday, Roberto Battelli, the Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that the 12 October general elections were held in a competitive environment but that the interethnic divide was a key factor.

“Yesterday’s elections demonstrate that Bosnia and Herzegovina has a legal framework sufficient for conducting democratic elections,” said Battelli, who serves as the OSCE PA’s Treasurer and Special Representative on South East Europe. “However, the lack of political will to move beyond the Dayton agreement prevents the country from moving away from the current inter-ethnic divides and towards real progress for the country.”

The lack of a shared vision in the country’s future and of co-operation among the three constituent peoples continues to hinder the reforms necessary to fully ensure democratic elections, and a growing mistrust in the functioning of democratic institutions endangers stability, observers said. At the same time, candidates were able to campaign freely and fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly were respected.

Marietta Tidei, who led the OSCE PA’s delegation of 27 parliamentarians, noted that election day was generally well administered and polling commission members for the most part performed efficiently. “The new 40 per cent gender requirement was respected both in the election administration bodies and in candidate lists,” she added. “This, unfortunately, does not necessarily translate into a proportionate gender balance in the legislative bodies.”

The OSCE PA election observation mission was supported by Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle, Director for Political Programmes Roberto Montella, Senior Policy Analyst Francesco Pagani and Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk from the International Secretariat. The PA worked closely with the OSCE/ODIHR’s mission and observers from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

President Kanerva addresses seminar and holds talks in Helsinki

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) underscored the vital contribution of the PA to the OSCE’s reform efforts on the 40th anniversary of its founding document at a seminar last week in Helsinki organized by the Finnish Committee for European Security and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Following the event, Kanerva held a meeting with Serbian Foreign Minister and incoming OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ivica Dacic, to discuss Belgrade’s priorities for its leadership of the Organization in 2015.

In his introductory remarks at the seminar, Kanerva

provided an overview of the OSCE PA’s Helsinki +40 Project, a series of events at top think tanks that is bringing together lawmakers, academicians and experts to evaluate the OSCE’s past and chart lines of action to improve its effectiveness. The Project’s first seminar was hosted by the Russian International Affairs Council in Moscow on 25 September and will be followed by events in Washington, Stockholm and Helsinki.

Also last week, Kanerva met in Helsinki with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland and U.S. Ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute for discussions on a variety of topics, including the situation in Ukraine.

Auditor meets with PA officials at Copenhagen headquarters

The final audit of the 2013-14 annual expenditures of the PA began this week in Copenhagen. The Assembly has been very proud of its record of perfect audits for more than 20 years, maintaining expenditures within the annual budget and income of the Assembly. Participating in the meetings this week are Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, outside independent professional auditor Pernille Dupont, Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Administrative Director Kurt Lerras and financial management consultant Merete Andreassen, who is employed part-time by the International Secretariat.



Left to right: Gustavo Pallares, Pernille Dupont, Spencer Oliver, Kurt Lerras and Merete Andreassen