

News from Copenhagen

Kanerva urges greater action on Ukraine at Ministerial Council

Addressing the OSCE's foreign ministers on 4 December in Basel, Switzerland, Assembly President President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) said that the OSCE is facing its greatest challenge in recent memory as it responds to the Ukraine crisis and must take decisive steps to resolve the conflict.

Referring in particular to actions of the Russian Federation, the president noted that Helsinki Principles are being ignored, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are being violated. Kanerva urged the OSCE to extend and expand its monitoring mission on the Ukrainian-Russian border for its work to be effective. He further called for the Organization's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine to be scaled up to its maximum strength of 500 monitors "sooner rather than later" and for the OSCE to consider additional peacekeeping initiatives. He also expressed concern over Russian challenges to the territorial integrity of other OSCE participating States, including Georgia and Moldova.

"The crisis in and around Ukraine has generated an institutional crisis," Kanerva noted. "What can the OSCE do to monitor, to defuse, to mediate? The institutional crisis has



President Ilkka Kanerva, sitting next to the incoming 2015 OSCE CIO Ivica Dacic, delivers his speech at the OSCE Ministerial Council.

also meant a truly existential crisis: What's the point of the Helsinki Final Act if countries that have pledged to play by these rules decide not to do so?" he asked.

In his address, Kanerva also spoke to the value of the Organization's continuing efforts to spur reform ahead of next year's 40th anniversary of the OSCE's founding document, the Helsinki Final Act. He encouraged foreign ministers to consider the PA's recommendations for reforming and updating the Organization, including those generated by the Assembly's ongoing Helsinki +40 Project.

The full text of his address is available at www.oscepa.org.

Senator Roger Wicker confirmed as Chair of the Committee on Political Affairs and Security

At the PA's Bureau meeting that took place in Basel on 3 December, President Kanerva raised the issue of the vacancy on the Assembly's General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, following the departure of former Committee Chair Asa Lindestam. Kanerva announced that he had asked United States Senator Roger Wicker, who had previously run for the position at the 2014 Baku Annual Session, to chair the

committee, to which Wicker subsequently agreed.

Having represented the state of Mississippi in the U.S. Senate since December 2007, Wicker is a member of the Senate's Armed Services Committee, among others, and serves on the U.S. Commission for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Helsinki Commission), as well as the United States' delegation to the OSCE PA.

Danish NGO visits International Secretariat



Spencer Oliver briefs visitors to the Secretariat on 8 December.

Members of the Peace and Stabilisation Association, a Danish non-governmental organization from which the Foreign Ministry of Denmark selects and seconds observers for OSCE election observation missions, visited the Parliamentary Assembly's headquarters in Copenhagen on Monday for a full briefing on the Assembly's work, followed by a lively question and answer session. OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, joined by senior staff members, explained the history of the PA and its relations with other OSCE institutions, with a focus on parliamentary diplomacy, conflict resolution and election observation.

VP Muttonen chairs nuclear roundtable

OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) chaired a Parliamentary Roundtable during the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons on Tuesday in Vienna. Hosted by the Austrian Parliament and co-sponsored by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the roundtable's focus was on promoting parliamentary actions with the goal of creating a nuclear-weapons-free world. The meeting included the participation of several Assembly members, as well as the PA's Special Representative in Vienna, Amb. Andreas Nothelle.

In her opening remarks, Vice-President Muttonen, who also serves as Co-President of PNND, noted that parliamentarians are in a unique position to "interact and co-operate with civil society," as well as to "influence and strengthen government positions" on nuclear disarmament. "Parliaments worldwide are doing this already," she said. "Now it is time to better connect ourselves, to exchange experiences and best practices and to discuss the possibilities of joint action."