

OSCE PA's 14th Autumn Meeting opens in Ulaanbaatar



Heads of OSCE Field Operations in Central Asia with OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen, President Ilkka Kanerva and Head of the Mongolian OSCE PA Delegation Migeddorg Batchimeg in Ulaanbaatar, 16 Sept. 2015

The OSCE PA's 2015 Autumn Meeting opened Wednesday in Ulaanbaatar with speeches by Mongolian President Elbegdorj Tsakhia, Parliament Chairman Enkhbold Zandaakhuu, Head of the Mongolian OSCE PA Delegation Migeddorg Batchimeg, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and others.

Hosted by the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, the Meeting has brought together nearly 200 parliamentarians in the Mongolian capital for discussions focusing on continuing and emerging security concerns for the OSCE area and the role of parliamentarians in fostering co-operation to address those concerns.

Topics being addressed in presentations and parliamentary debate include the crisis in and around Ukraine, the refugee crisis and human trafficking, food and water security, and counter-terrorism. The Autumn Meeting is also considering trends and issues of particular relevance to countries in the eastern part of the OSCE area, including a special roundtable on Central Asia held on Wednesday featuring the heads of OSCE field presences in the region.

In his opening address to the parliamentarians, President Tsakhia said that despite serious challenges to Eurasian security, including the Ukraine and refugee crises, there is still reason for hope, including the potential of the OSCE to address current challenges.

Chairman Zandaakhuu noted that the 2015 Autumn Meeting coincides with the 25th anniversary of Mongolia's first democratic elections, which led to the establishment of a permanent parliamentary system in the country. The Parliament's decision to host the Autumn Meeting is a testament to its belief in democratic dialogue, he said.

In President Kanerva's opening remarks, he spoke about the crisis in and around Ukraine as well as the migrant and refugee crisis, saying that Europe needs to respond to the influx of refugees "with solidarity and compassion."

Russian Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin, Ukrainian OSCE PA Delegation Head Artur Gerasymov and Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai were among parliamentarians from more than a dozen countries to participate in an opening general debate.

President Kanerva and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver also met on Wednesday with Speaker Naryshkin and other members of the Russian Delegation to the OSCE PA. The President indicated that he supports EU sanctions in response to Russia's actions in the context of the Ukraine crisis but is working to ensure that sanctions against individuals do not inhibit inter-parliamentary dialogue.

In a separate meeting with members of the Russian and Ukrainian Delegations, the sides held a constructive discussion on how to support implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

OSCE PA VP Muttonen holds meetings in Beijing to strengthen ties



Christine Muttonen and SCO Deputy Secretary General Sabyr Imandosov

In an effort to strengthen co-operation between the OSCE PA and the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) held a day of meetings earlier this week

in Beijing, China. Meeting on Monday with officials from the SCO, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Communist Party, as well as the EU Delegation in Beijing, Muttonen underscored the importance of developing co-operative initiatives between the OSCE and SCO and other institutions in China. She reported on her visit at the OSCE PA's Autumn Meeting in Ulaanbaatar during Wednesday's roundtable event on Central Asia.