

OSCE PA's 16th Winter Meeting taking place next week in Vienna

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will hold its 16th Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna on 23-24 February 2017. Following a meeting of the Assembly's Standing Committee of heads of national delegations on the morning of 23 February, the Winter Meeting will open with a joint session of the three general committees.

The opening session is expected to feature speeches by President of the National Council of Austria Doris Bures, OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria), and OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (MP, Canada). In the closing joint session on the afternoon of 24 February, parliamentarians will hear addresses by Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria Sebastian Kurz and OSCE Secretary General Amb. Lamberto Zannier, followed by a question and answer session.

The three general committees will meet to hear from government representatives of OSCE participating States and debate issues related to political and security affairs, economics and the environment, and human rights and humanitarian questions. The First Committee will hold a debate on "Transnational security in the OSCE area: confronting terrorism;" the Second Committee will debate "Managing natural resources, addressing water security and combating



OSCE flags flying outside the Hofburg in Vienna.

climate change;" and the Third Committee's debate will focus on "Protecting human rights amid growing populism."

Each committee will also hear presentations by committee rapporteurs regarding their ideas and intentions for the reports and draft resolutions to be prepared for the 26th Annual Session in Minsk in July.

The Winter Meeting will conclude with a special debate held in a

joint session of the three committees on the afternoon of 24 February. The theme for the debate is "Protecting human rights in times of crisis," with dozens of interventions expected to address the importance of upholding fundamental rights during periods of heightened security concerns.

More information about the Winter Meeting, including the full draft programme, is available at www.oscepa.org. The OSCE PA will be using the hashtag #OSCEPA during the meeting on social media.

Since February 2002, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has held its Winter Meeting each year in Vienna. The second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar, the Winter Meeting provides an opportunity for the three general committees to hold discussions on timely issues and to be briefed by high-level OSCE officials, as well as to prepare for the next Annual Session.

Santos delivers lecture on 'Portugal and the OSCE' at military institute in Lisbon



Isabel Santos delivering lecture in Lisbon, 9 Feb. 2017.

OSCE PA Vice-President Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) gave a lecture last week on "Portugal and the OSCE" at the Institute of Higher Military Studies in Lisbon in its Course for Promotion to General Officer 2016-17. The 9 February lecture focused on the OSCE's role in promoting security in Europe

and the points of contact with the new security strategy in the European Union.

Santos discussed in particular protracted conflicts in the OSCE area, the new challenges facing the Organization today and the role played by Portugal and the Parliamentary Assembly since the beginning of the OSCE's work.

Prior to being elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the Tbilisi Annual Session in July 2016, Santos had previously served three years as Chair of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, and before that as Vice-Chair. She also serves as Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration.