

Reforms welcomed in Armenian elections but trust lacking, say observers



Ignacio Sanchez Amor and Geir Jorgen Bekkevold, 3 April 2017.

The 2 April parliamentary elections in Armenia were well administered and fundamental freedoms were generally respected, concluded international observers in a statement delivered in Yerevan Monday. While welcoming reforms of the legal framework, the observers noted that the elections were tainted by credible information about vote-buying, and pressure on civil servants. This contributed to an overall lack of confidence and trust in the elections, the statement says.

“Yesterday’s elections marked a first step towards establishing a new political system in Armenia, but change cannot happen overnight,” said Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain), who had been appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term

OSCE observer mission. “Reform is a never-ending process, and I encourage the parliamentary majority and the new government to continue their efforts to transform the country’s political culture.”

Geir Jorgen Bekkevold (MP, Norway), who served as Head of the OSCE PA’s delegation for the election observation mission, noted that the new electoral law provides for greater representation of women and minorities. “I am glad to note that a greater number of our colleagues in the National Assembly will be women, and I encourage political parties to empower them to bring about transformative change,” he said.

Ahead of the elections last week, Sanchez Amor, who serves as the OSCE PA Third Committee Chair and Head of the Spanish Delegation, and Bekkevold, who is Head of the OSCE PA’s Norwegian Delegation, held high-level meetings in Yerevan, including with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan.

The PA worked closely in this election observation mission with the OSCE/ODIHR, PACE, and the European Parliament. The 63-member delegation from the OSCE PA was supported by Secretariat staff members Iryna Sabashuk, Loic Poulain, Anna Di Domenico, and Bo Nielsen.

President and Secretary General visit Malta for talks at Parliament and PAM

OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen and Secretary General Roberto Montella were in Malta this week for talks with the Speaker of the Maltese Parliament, Angelo Farrugia, Head of Malta’s OSCE PA Delegation, Godfrey Farrugia, and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Sergio Piazzì.

In her meeting with Speaker Farrugia on Tuesday, Muttonen offered gratitude for Malta’s high level of engagement with the OSCE PA, noting that the Maltese Delegation has always participated actively in the Assembly’s meetings. The two sides also discussed Malta’s role in advancing co-operation with the OSCE’s Mediterranean Partner States.



OSCE PA delegation with Speaker Farrugia, 4 April 2017.

In the meeting with Secretary General Piazzì, the sides discussed matters of mutual concern to PAM and the OSCE PA, such as migration, terrorism, and climate change. They also explored areas for possible future co-operation between the two assemblies, including joint activities in the region and election observation.

Vice-Chair Picchi represents PA at London cybersecurity conference

First Committee Vice-Chair Guglielmo Picchi (MP, Italy) spoke on behalf of the OSCE PA at the International Parliamentary Conference on National Security and Cybersecurity, organized by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Project in partnership with the OSCE, on 30 March. Addressing a session on “Building International and Regional Partnerships and Agreements,” Picchi spoke about the role of the Assembly within the OSCE and its value as an interparliamentary forum for dialogue. He also described the OSCE’s work on cybersecurity.

Budget talks with Assembly Treasurer Barnett in Germany

OSCE PA Treasurer Doris Barnett (MP, Germany) hosted Secretary General Roberto Montella, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and Finance Officer Predrag Radjenovic in her hometown of Ludwigshafen, Germany, on Monday. Barnett and the Secretariat members discussed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2018-19 and a set of financial regulations being developed at the Secretariat. Treasurer Barnett will present the budget proposal to the OSCE PA Bureau meeting later this month, where Montella will also present the proposed financial regulations.