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In Central Asia, President Muttonen highlights nuclear dangers, regional co-operation



Christine Muttonen addresses Pugwash Conference, 25 Aug.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Christine Muttonen (Austria) spoke at the 62nd Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in Astana, Kazakhstan, last Friday on the theme of "Confronting New Nuclear Dangers," and held a number of meetings in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan over several days. In her speech at the Pugwash Conference, she said that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament must be high on the international agenda, regretting that some OSCE participating States continue to include nuclear deterrence in their national security strategies.

"We see a disconnect between what most of the world wants and the policies that a handful of nuclear powers are pursuing," Muttonen said. She noted that at its recent Annual Session in Minsk, the OSCE PA welcomed the treaty agreed to in New York last month by 122 countries to establish an international ban against the possession, acquisition, or deployment of nuclear weapons.

Muttonen discussed the contribution that parliamentarians can make towards advancing the goal of non-proliferation and disarmament, noting that one of the most urgent tasks is helping to boost the signing and swift ratification of the



Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Christine Muttonen, 25 Aug.

Nuclear Ban Treaty. She said that this treaty is an important step towards establishing a legal framework for the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

While in Astana, President Muttonen held meetings with Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Religious and Civil Society Affairs, the Secretary of State and the Prosecutor General. In meetings, topics of discussion included regional issues, counter-terrorism, rule of law and recent constitutional changes in Kazakhstan, the country's role in the OSCE PA, and national religious groups. She also met with Chairman of the Senate and Head of Kazakhstan's OSCE PA Delegation Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, discussing disarmament affairs and regional security challenges.

OSCE PA Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) and Secretary General Roberto Montella joined the President in Kazakhstan along with adviser Lukas Mussi. From Kazakhstan, Muttonen travelled to Tashkent and Samarkand in Uzbekistan, where she met with officials including Deputy Minister of Culture Kamola Akilova, Director of the Uzbek State Museum of Art Fayziyeva Vasila and Deputy Mayor of Samarkand Nigora Suyarova.

PA Vice-President Guliyev speaks on terrorism in Astana

Representing the OSCE PA at the 62nd Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in Astana, Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) spoke on Sunday during the plenary session on terrorism. Guliyev highlighted the OSCE PA's new Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, which was established following a unanimous decision by the Standing Committee in Minsk last month, and stressed that the international community should be united in fighting violent extremism.

"All countries must unite in this difficult time to prevent possible attacks and combat extremism jointly, forfeit their individual objectives and combine their efforts in front of the common goal: counter-terrorism," he said.



Azay Guliyev addresses Pugwash Conference, 27 August.

Upcoming election observation in Germany and Kyrgyzstan

The OSCE PA is deploying missions to observe elections in Germany and Kyrgyzstan. For the 24 September parliamentary elections in Germany, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Sebastian Kurz has appointed PA Vice-President George Tsereteli (Georgia) as Special Co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observers. The PA's delegation of observers for the mission will be headed by Vice-President Isabel Santos (Portugal). It is the first time for the PA observing an election in Germany.

For the 15 October presidential election in Kyrgyzstan, OSCE PA Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) will serve as OSCE Special Co-ordinator and Second Committee Vice-Chair Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) will lead the PA's delegation of observers. It will be the ninth time the OSCE PA has observed an election in Kyrgyzstan.

The deadline to register for the German election observation mission is 8 September and the deadline for Kyrgyzstan is 15 September.