

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA Bureau meets ahead of 24th Ministerial Council in Vienna

Elected leaders of the OSCE PA met Wednesday in Vienna on the eve of the OSCE's 24th Ministerial Council for discussions on OSCE-related work, hearing from senior OSCE officials including the Secretary General and the Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council. PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) opened the Bureau meeting with a report on his activities since assuming the presidency last month. He noted in particular discussions held at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen and the remarks he delivered at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 November.

OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger spoke about the crisis of confidence in the OSCE, stressing that the situation cannot be allowed to degenerate further. He underlined that the PA's commitment to fostering dialogue is an added value in these times of divisions and stressed that the unique potential of the Assembly should be exploited to the fullest. He expressed desire to continue developing close relations with the PA and working closely with his counterpart, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella.

In the question and answer session with Amb. Greminger, Bureau members raised issues related to the OSCE budget, resolving protracted conflicts, and engagement with Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Earlier in the day, Greminger held a bilateral meeting with Tsereteli and Montella in which both sides expressed desire for a strong OSCE.

The Chair of the OSCE Permanent Council, Austrian Ambassador Clemens Koja, addressed a range of issues that the Austrian Chairmanship has focused on in 2017, with particular attention on rebuilding trust throughout the



George Tsereteli opens the Bureau meeting, 6 Dec. 2017.

OSCE area. He discussed the efforts in establishing a process of structured dialogue in order to relaunch arms control negotiations, noting that the process will continue into 2018. Koja also discussed recent progress in the Transdniestrian settlement process.

OSCE PA Treasurer Doris Barnett (Germany) reported on the financial health of the Assembly, noting that the International Secretariat continues to provide strong financial management and that the Assembly functions very efficiently under a limited budget.

Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Working Practices Peter Bowness (United Kingdom) spoke about possible refinements for ensuring that statutory meetings of the Assembly make the most of their time, including by exploring ideas for streamlining meetings. Emphasizing that the goal is to enhance the efficiency of the Assembly's work, Bowness invited members to consider possibilities for reforms to discuss at a future date.

Special Representative on the South Caucasus Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) addressed challenges of the region, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He discussed ways of enhancing the PA's engagement in the South Caucasus, noting that he will be preparing a more comprehensive report ahead of the OSCE PA's Winter Meeting in February.

SG Montella also reported to the Bureau, noting the varied and focused activities of the Assembly. He praised in particular members' work on election observation, counter-terrorism and migration.



Roberto Montella and George Tsereteli meet with Thomas Greminger in Vienna, 6 Dec. 2017.

PA's Kanerva addresses Astana Club in Kazakhstan, emphasizing international commitments

OSCE PA President Emeritus and Special Representative on Mediation Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) addressed the opening session of the Astana Club meeting on 13 November. Speaking on the topic of "Greater Eurasia: Chances for Success," Kanerva noted that although there is much insecurity in many parts of the world, the power of negotiation and dialogue remains strong. He stressed the importance of recalling international commitments both in the United Nations and in regional organizations such as the OSCE.

While acknowledging that disagreements are an essential element in democracies, when political tensions threaten

peace and stability, there should be a way of facing challenges and finding solutions, Kanerva said. He noted that the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, also plays an important role in the Eurasia region.

The Astana Club meeting focused on exploring trends such as the balance of power among global geopolitical players, growth in populism and nationalism, trade and sanctions, and new security threats. Founded in 2015, the Astana Club provides a forum for influential experts, business leaders, and politicians to pursue dialogue about opportunities and challenges facing Eurasia.