

# News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

Number 683

Updates from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

[@oscepa](https://twitter.com/oscepa)

20 December 2017

## Season's Greetings and a year-end message from the Secretary General



Family photo of participants at OSCE PA Retreat in Villach on 29 May.



Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Vice-Chair Sena Nur Celik in Gaziantep, 17 May.



Voting at the Minsk Annual Session, 9 July.

As 2017 draws to a close, I want to thank all of the parliamentarians and staff from across the OSCE area who have contributed to our work, provided leadership to all of the OSCE PA's activities, and the delegations that have hosted meetings. Everyone who has participated in our meetings, election observation missions, field visits and committee work knows that this has been a particularly active year in which OSCE parliamentarians have contributed in a real way towards promoting comprehensive security.

The Annual Session in Minsk, Autumn Meeting in Andorra, and Winter Meeting in Vienna brought together hundreds of parliamentarians for debates on some of the most pressing issues of the day, including human rights in times of crisis, cybersecurity, climate change and the importance of education as a guarantee of stability.

Thank you once again to the hosts of these meetings and we look forward to more opportunities to build dialogue and exchange best practices next year. Preparations for 2018 meetings are well underway, with PA staff visiting Berlin just last week to prepare for the Annual Session, which is being held 7-11 July under the theme "Implementing OSCE Commitments: The Role of Parliaments."

Election observation remained a central focus, with 215 observers deployed to five countries in 2017, including the PA's first-ever missions to Germany and Mongolia.

President Christine Muttonen (Austria) provided strong leadership, for which we are all grateful. I also thank George Tsereteli (Georgia) for stepping up to succeed her in November and for the leadership he has provided so far as President. We look forward to continue working together in 2018.

The PA conducted high-level diplomacy throughout the OSCE area in 2017, including in North America, the South Caucasus, North Africa and Central Asia. President Muttonen visited countries including Uzbekistan, Canada, Belarus, the United States of America, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Morocco, and China. Senior OSCE PA members, led by then-Vice-President Tsereteli, visited Turkey in June to follow up on developments following the attempted coup

of July 2016, while Special Representatives Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) and Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) visited the South Caucasus and South East Europe, respectively.

The Assembly actively engaged on the issue of migration throughout the year, with working visits to Greece, Turkey and Italy, and a major report issued in October by the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. OSCE parliamentarians also made countering terrorism and violent extremism a key priority in 2017, with members participating in several international conferences on the topic. At the Annual Session in Minsk, the Standing Committee agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, which met for the first time on the margins of the Autumn Meeting in Andorra. Its first working visit was to Vienna, where members of the Ad Hoc Committee met with OSCE and UN officials on 13-14 November.

In short, it has been an exceptional year of parliamentary diplomacy and engagement. Once again, I offer thanks on behalf of the International Secretariat for all those who have made this work possible. And on behalf of the PA, I would also like to thank the Danish Parliament and Austrian Government for hosting our offices in Copenhagen and Vienna.

As we prepare for a busy 2018, I wish all delegations a very happy holiday season, and all the best for the new year.

– OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella

