

President Tsereteli visits Moldova ahead of parliamentary elections

In meetings this week in Moldova, OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) stressed the importance of holding transparent and fair elections, noting that the conduct of the 24 February parliamentary elections would be watched closely by the OSCE PA and other international observers.

President Tsereteli met in Chisinau with President Igor Dodon, President of the Parliament Andrian Candu, Prime Minister Pavel Filip, and Foreign Minister Tudor Ulianoschi and Moldova's delegation to the OSCE PA, headed by Serghei Sirbu. He also met Vlad Plahotniuc, Chairman of the Democratic Party of Moldova, and leading members from extra-parliamentary parties, as well as representatives of civil society and the international community.

Tsereteli expressed his hope that following the election, efforts on the Transdniestrian settlement process can continue without delay. He urged both Chisinau and Tiraspol to sustain momentum in the process.

The President reiterated the importance being paid to developments in Moldova by the OSCE, noting that his trip comes just days after a visit by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak. President Tsereteli also expressed his appreciation for the excellent



work being done by the OSCE Mission to Moldova.

While in Chisinau, the President met with Matyas Eorsi, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission. OSCE PA observers of the parliamentary elections will work closely with the observer mission deployed by the ODIHR on 15 January.

The President will report on his visit to Moldova at the OSCE PA's Winter Meeting next month. The OSCE PA has observed elections in Moldova nine times: in 1994, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2014 and 2016.

The visit was supported by Andreas Baker and Loic Poulain from the International Secretariat. It was President Tsereteli's second official visit to Moldova in the past year.

Tsereteli addresses OSCE Permanent Council, holds meetings in Vienna



OSCE PA President George Tsereteli addressed the ambassadors of the OSCE's 57 participating States on 17 January and held a number of bilateral meetings with OSCE counterparts. In his address to the Permanent Council, Tsereteli urged doing more for the security of citizens of the OSCE area, including by increasing efforts on democracy, human rights and civil liberties. He highlighted positive developments but regretted that too many people remain victims of unresolved conflicts and human rights violations.

"The environment we are in and the behavior of several participating States clearly demonstrates the need for more sustainability in the OSCE's work and to provide the OSCE with the resources it needs to do its job," President Tsereteli said. "With East-West relations now at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War, what we need is a strong OSCE that can serve as a forum for real confidence-building."

He noted the added value of OSCE field presences and highlighted the PA's position regarding the need for a reform of the consensus rule and to establish modalities that allow for the organization to better function. The President welcomed the new Slovak OSCE Chairmanship's priorities.

Joined by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, Tsereteli held a series of bilateral meetings in Vienna.

President Tsereteli and Secretary General Montella met with the President of the Austrian National Council and Head of the Delegation of Austria to the OSCE PA Wolfgang Sobotka for talks focused on the crisis in and around Ukraine. Meetings were also held with Reinhold Lopatka, the Deputy Head of the Austrian Delegation, OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, OSCE Representative on Media Freedom Harlem Désir, Permanent Representative of Slovakia Radomir Bohac, and the PA's Special Representative on Central Asia, Roman Haider.

Deadlines reminder

Delegations are kindly reminded of the following dates:

- **23 January:** Deadline for registering for the Winter Meeting in Vienna, taking place 21-22 February
- **1 February:** Deadline for registering to observe the 24 February elections in Moldova