

News from Copenhagen

In visit to Washington, Tsereteli emphasizes US-OSCE PA co-operation



George Tsereteli with Helsinki Commission staff, 7 February

As part of their visit to Washington, DC last week, OSCE PA President George Tsereteli and Secretary General Roberto Montella met with members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, including PA Vice-President Roger Wicker, Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin, Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues Chris Smith, former Vice-President Robert Aderholt, Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism Vice-Chair Richard Hudson, Steve Cohen, and Sheila Jackson Lee.

Discussions focused on next week's Winter Meeting, the

crisis in and around Ukraine, upcoming election observation activities, as well as the themes of upcoming PA meetings and follow-up mechanisms to the Assembly's declarations.

The President and Secretary General extended their congratulations upon last week's appointment of former PA President Alcee Hastings as the Commission's new Chairman for the 116th Congress. They also sat down with staff from the Helsinki Commission and the House Majority Leader to explore ways to further increase co-operation between the PA and Congress, including through congressional hearings.

Tsereteli and Montella took part in the National Prayer Breakfast on 7 February, which featured a speech by President Donald Trump. They spoke with several guests and dignitaries including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and Sam Brownback, the U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom.

Tsereteli also met with Assistant Secretary Denise Natali and Deputy Assistant Secretary Pete Marocco, at the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations in the State Department.

Minors returning from conflict zones focus of CCT visit to France

Members of the PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) visited Paris on 7-8 February, meeting with government officials and experts for discussions on the French experience with terrorism and the policy implications of minors returning from foreign conflict zones. Led by CCT Chair Makis Voridis (Greece), the delegation commended France's counter-terrorism work and noted the exceptional challenges involved with preventing radicalization and de-radicalizing youth who have been engaged in active conflicts.

The CCT members heard from representatives of government bodies including the Anti-Terrorist Co-ordination Unit, the Interagency Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalization, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Interior. The visit, which was supported by the French



CCT members in Paris, 7 February

Parliament and Marco Bonabello and Maria Teresa Yagüe from the International Secretariat, included CCT members Kamil Aydin (Turkey), Aude Bono-Vandorme (France), Lisa Chambers (Ireland), Ignacio Cosidó (Spain), Paolo Grimoldi (Italy), Abid Qayyum Raja (Norway), and Guy Teissier (France).

Special Rep Cardin speaks at OSCE anti-Semitism conference

Speaking by video link to the OSCE Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region, which took place in Bratislava on 5-6 February, the OSCE PA's Ben Cardin (United States) stressed that there is a notable growth in anti-Semitic and xenophobic rhetoric across Europe and North America, which he regretted is not only on the fringes but increasingly coming from political leaders.

Cardin discussed his work as the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance, noting that he has focused on the urgent issues of anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, discriminatory policing, and racism and xenophobia impacting migrant and refugee

populations. In the U.S., he has worked to ensure that the annual federal budget includes funding to fight anti-Semitism globally and at home, he said. "As leaders, I ask that you join me today in working across the OSCE

community to ensure that all people in our borders are able to live and worship in safety and dignity," Cardin said. For the full video, please visit youtube.com/oscepa.

