

News from Copenhagen

18th Winter Meeting held in Vienna



The OSCE PA's 18th Winter Meeting concluded on 22 February in Vienna with lively debates on migration, counter-terrorism, gender issues, and combating corruption. With nearly 300 OSCE parliamentarians in attendance, Chairs of OSCE PA ad hoc committees, Special Representatives, and leaders of recent election observation missions presented reports at the closing plenary session.

At the opening session on 21 February, PA members heard speeches by PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia), President of the Austrian National Council Wolfgang Sobotka OSCE Chair-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčák, and OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger.

Tsereteli and Secretary General Roberto Montella held a series of bilateral meetings while in Vienna, including with the U.S. and Russian delegations, and the Chairman of the Kazakh Mazhilis Nurlan Nigmatulin. They also met with OSCE CiO Lajčák and Secretary General Greminger.

The general committees of the OSCE PA met for discussions on issues such as restrictions on human rights during emergencies; fighting corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism; and how to best leverage the tools and mechanisms of the OSCE to resolve protracted conflicts.

Rapporteurs of the general committees presented their ideas and intentions for the reports and draft resolutions they will be preparing for this summer's Annual Session, to be held in Luxembourg on 4-8 July.

PA observes Moldovan elections



Moldova's 24 February parliamentary elections were competitive and fundamental rights were generally respected, but the campaign took place against a backdrop of disaffection with public institutions and was tainted by allegations of pressure on public employees, strong indications of vote buying and the misuse of state resources, observers concluded in a preliminary statement released Monday.

Observers raised concerns over the control and ownership of the media by political actors but noted that most aspects of the elections were administered in a professional and transparent manner.

"This was an active, hard-fought and polarized campaign in generally well-run elections," said PA President George Tsereteli, who served as Special Co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observer mission. "I call on my newly elected parliamentary colleagues to now deliver on promises, address the problems we identified, and meet the expectations of the people."

"The prominent role that women play in running elections was on display yesterday in polling stations across the country," said PA Vice-President Kari Henriksen, who led the 42-member OSCE PA delegation. "Considering that women are the majority of the population, political leaders must assume their responsibility to step up and effectively translate this into equal political power and representation."

The OSCE PA worked closely with colleagues from PACE, the European Parliament, and OSCE/ODIHR.

OSCE PA President Tsereteli leads pre-electoral visit to Ukraine

OSCE PA President George Tsereteli and Treasurer Doris Barnett (Germany) are in Kyiv this week on a pre-electoral visit ahead of the election observation mission to be deployed for the 31 March presidential election. The OSCE PA delegation, which also includes Secretary General Roberto Montella, Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle and Presidential Advisor Loic Poulain, is meeting with candidates and their representatives, including Yulia Tymoshenko, Yuriy Boyko and deputy of Anatoliy Grytsenko, Svitlana Zalishchuk.

Meetings are also being held with Amb. Peter Tejler, Head of the ODIHR election observation mission; Tatyana Slipachuk, Chair of the CEC; Amb. Henrik Villadsen, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine; and Andriy Parubiy, Speaker



of the Verkhovna Rada, as well as representatives of the international community and civil society.

Barnett will lead the PA's delegation of observers to the 31 March election and Tsereteli has nominated President Emeritus Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) to serve as Special Co-ordinator.