

News from Copenhagen

Preparations continue for OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Helsinki +40 Project



HELSINKI +40

OSCE PA

Preparations are under way for the Helsinki +40 seminar on 27 April in Copenhagen. The seminar, entitled “The OSCE’s Lack of Legal Status – Challenges in Crisis Situations,” will focus on the implications of the OSCE’s lack of legal personality – including on the Ukraine crisis – and examine proposals on how to strengthen its legal framework.

The Copenhagen event will take place immediately following the annual OSCE PA Bureau meeting at the Danish Parliament (Folketinget) and is being co-organized by the OSCE PA, the Folketing and the Danish Institute for International Studies. It will feature keynote presentations by Amb. John Bernhard, the Special Advisor of the Chairperson-in-Office on the Legal Framework, and Lisa Tabassi, Head of Legal Services at the OSCE Secretariat.

Participants will share their views on the existing draft proposals on the OSCE’s legal framework, offer suggestions for the language on the Parliamentary Assembly and discuss ways to move the process forward.

In the OSCE PA’s Oslo Declaration, the Assembly broadly endorsed strengthening the legal framework for the OSCE. “The OSCE PA proposes that the OSCE be strengthened in its competence, professionalism and effectiveness, and that, as an important first step, the draft convention on legal personality and privileges and immunities be adopted,” reads the document.

The next step of the Project will be the Helsinki +40 Colloquium on 27-28 May in Serbia. Co-organized with the Parliament of Serbia and the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, the seminar will focus on the future of the OSCE in the field, considering in particular the experience of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. On the second day, participants will discuss the overall outcomes of the Helsinki +40 Project.

Previous Helsinki +40 seminars have been held in Stockholm, Washington and Moscow. The Helsinki +40 Final Report, integrating the conclusions from all five seminars, will be presented at the PA’s 24th Annual Session in Helsinki.

Tsereteli to lead OSCE PA’s election observation efforts in United Kingdom



George Tsereteli at the OSCE PA’s recent Winter Meeting in Vienna.

OSCE PA Vice-President George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia) has agreed to lead the Assembly’s election observation mission to the United Kingdom’s parliamentary elections on 7 May. An experienced election

observer, Tsereteli most recently participated in the election observation mission to the 26 October 2014 parliamentary elections in Ukraine. He was appointed to lead the OSCE PA’s mission to the United Kingdom by President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland).

Vice-President Tsereteli played a leading role when the OSCE PA last observed elections in the United Kingdom. In May 2010 the PA said that the UK’s elections “demonstrated that democracy is a vibrant force in the world’s oldest parliamentary system,” but “show[ed] that reform may be needed to the complex system.”

Registration for the observation mission is open for OSCE PA delegations until 17 April. Before deploying for election day observation, observers will attend two days of briefings in London. The mission is being co-ordinated by Director of Elections Andreas Baker, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk, Programme Officer Loic Poulain and Research Fellow Roger Willis. Secretary General Spencer Oliver is also expected to participate.

A Member of the Georgian Parliament since 1999, Tsereteli has served as Deputy Chairman of the Parliament and since 2010 as President of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. He was elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the 2012 Annual Session in Monaco.

Registration opens for Turkish EOM

Registration for OSCE PA delegations has opened for the election observation mission to Turkey for the 7 June 2015 parliamentary elections. The deadline for registering is 15 May.