

News from Copenhagen

Assembly leadership to meet in Copenhagen

On Monday April 24, the Expanded Bureau of the Assembly will convene in Copenhagen to prepare for the upcoming Annual Session, to be held in Brussels in July. President Alcee L. Hastings will chair the Expanded Bureau meeting, which will bring together the Treasurer, Vice-Presidents and Officers of the three General Committees. The meeting is hosted by the Danish Parliament, which also hosts the Assembly headquarters, and in accordance with tradition, the Head of the Danish Delegation, Kristian Pihl-Lorentzen, will welcome Members and participate in the meeting.

The Expanded Bureau meeting provides an opportunity for the Rapporteurs of the three General Committees, Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria), Roland Blum (France), and Anne-Marie Lizin (Belgium), to present drafts of their reports and resolutions, and to gain feedback from the other officers of the Assembly. This year's Annual Session will focus on the theme 'Strengthening Human Security in the OSCE Region'.

The officers of the Assembly will also hear updates on recent Assembly activities, including the election observation

missions to Belarus and Ukraine in March, and the work of Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives.

The Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure, chaired by Pieter DeCrem (Belgium), will also meet in Copenhagen on Sunday April 23 to consider proposed changes to the Assembly's Rules. The Members of the Sub-Committee are also invited to take part in the Expanded Bureau meeting.



Ad Hoc Committee visits Abkhazia (Georgia)

From 11-13 April, three Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia (Georgia) visited Georgia. Tone Tingsgaard (Sweden) Chair of the Committee, Barbara Haering (Switzerland) and Yakup Kepenek (Turkey) started their programme in Tbilisi where they met with Nino Burjanadze, Speaker of the Georgian Parliament and other members of the Georgian OSCE PA Delegation. They also met with Irakli Alasania, Presidential Advisor on Conflict Issues and George Volski, Deputy State Minister on Conflict Resolution Issues representing the Georgian Government, as well as Ambassador Roy Reeve, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia.

After meetings in Tbilisi, the Delegation traveled to Sukhumi where they for the first time met with the Abkhaz leadership. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee listened to the views and ideas of Members of the *de facto* Abkhaz Parliament, including the *de facto* Parliamentary Speaker, Nugzar Ashuba, and they also had the opportunity to discuss the promotion of parliamentary dialogue in the region. They also met with Sergei Shamba, *de facto* Foreign Minister. The UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) organized the visit



of the Committee to Sukhumi, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini provided the OSCE PA Members with a thorough briefing. On the way from Tbilisi to Sukhumi, the Delegation passed the security and demilitarized zones by car and had an opportunity to see the consequences of the war on both sides of the ceasefire line.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Abkhazia (Georgia) has been working for several years to establish direct contact with representatives of Abkhazia in order to fulfill its mandate to help promote the creation of a political framework at the parliamentary level to facilitate reconciliation and a resolution of the conflict. During the visit, the Members of the Committee stressed that their mandate is not to negotiate a solution but to promote parliamentary dialogue in order to assist and support the ongoing UN-led conflict settlement process, and they expressed their willingness and hope for continued dialogue with both sides.

The Delegation was accompanied by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn and Programme Officer Anna Chernova from the International Secretariat.