

President Tsereteli and other PA leaders participate in Ministerial Council



Family photo in Bratislava, 5 December 2019

The PA participated in the OSCE's 26th Ministerial Council in Bratislava last week, with President George Tsereteli addressing the opening of the meeting and several Bureau members attending various sessions and side events.

The central decision-making and governing body of the OSCE, the Ministerial Council met on 5-6 December in the capital of Slovakia. The meeting, held annually, provides the foreign ministers of the 57 OSCE participating States an opportunity to review the Organization's activities, and provides OSCE parliamentarians an opportunity to engage with the OSCE's governmental side, as well as network with representatives of OSCE institutions.

In his opening address, President Tsereteli noted that citizens of the OSCE area need the Organization and its political leaders to implement OSCE commitments and to overcome conflicts. Highlighting recent tangible achievements in Ukraine, Tsereteli said that the developments are a sign of hope that progress can be made with the help of the OSCE. In several countries, however, there are anti-democratic attempts to consolidate state power, he said, which limits what the OSCE can do.

"In the end, it depends on you, dear Ministers, and your Heads of States and Governments, to allow this organization



Roberto Montella and George Tsereteli with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, Bratislava, 5 December 2019

to be successful," Tsereteli said. "This is why this gathering is so important to ensure adequate attention by the highest level to the OSCE."

He highlighted the outcomes of the Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session in Luxembourg last summer and its policy recommendations on issues such as unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area, climate change, gender policies, fighting corruption, energy security, and youth engagement.

The PA's Bureau met in Bratislava for discussions on OSCE-related work. Bureau members heard from President Tsereteli, Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen (Denmark), Secretary General Roberto Montella, and Lukas Parizek, Special Representative for the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship.

Addressing the Bureau meeting, Parizek stressed the crucial role parliamentarians play in making the voices heard of the people they represent. "We need you to support the OSCE with your voice in your countries and explain the importance of this unique organization to people," he said.

Tsereteli and Montella held several bilateral meetings on the margins of the Ministerial. They met with the delegations of Azerbaijan, Croatia, Turkey, the United States, and Uzbekistan. Discussions were also held with diplomats from the European Union and Luxembourg.

OSCE PA staff on preparatory visits in Tajikistan and Ireland

OSCE PA staff members are in Tajikistan and Ireland this week related to elections work and an upcoming OSCE PA conference. Senior Programme Officer Farimah Daftary is participating in a Needs Assessment Mission organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in view of the 1 March 2020 parliamentary elections. The NAM is meeting in Dushanbe with election stakeholders, civil society and media representatives to assess the pre-electoral environment and help determine possible activities that may be deployed for the March elections.

Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Head of Conference Services Odile Lelarge and Administration and Logistics Officer Dimitrije Todorčić are in Dublin to begin preparing for the 2021 Autumn Meeting. The PA team is meeting with representatives from the Irish Parliament, including Peter Finnegan, Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, as well as staff from hotels and the venue to assess the logistical and technical aspects of the meeting. Hosted by the Irish Parliament, the 20th Autumn Meeting will take place 27-29 October 2021.

Featured tweets @oscepa

OSCE parliamentarians have been active on Twitter, with Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) issuing a video message to mark the closing of the #16days campaign on gender-based violence. Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) tweeted a statement on Monday marking International Anti-Corruption Day while Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) and Michael Georg Link (Germany), the Chair and Vice-Chair of the PA's Third Committee, respectively, tweeted Tuesday to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

