

Tsereteli and Montella discuss OSCE priorities with Danish Speaker of Parliament



George Tsereteli speaks with Henrik Dam Kristensen at the Danish Folketing, 9 Sept.

OSCE PA President George Tsereteli and Secretary General Roberto Montella met Wednesday with Henrik Dam Kristensen, Speaker of Parliament (Folketing) of Denmark, for talks that touched on matters of concern including developments in Belarus, conflicts in the OSCE area and future elections in the OSCE region. The discussions underlined the urgency to address enduring challenges to ensure long-term stability and security.

The President and Secretary General offered gratitude to Denmark for the country's generosity in hosting the OSCE PA's International Secretariat, and underlined the role of Danish member Peter Juel Jensen as PA Treasurer in maintaining a lean and efficient organization.

Denmark's continued support and interest in the work of the OSCE was noted, as was the valuable input of OSCE parliamentarians in the service of the Organization. The President voiced appreciation for the Folketing's continued support for MPs to undertake travel on behalf of the PA despite pandemic restrictions, noting that Danish parliamentarian Kristian Jensen recently participated in the PA's first election observation activity since COVID -- the Special Limited Election Observation Mission to Montenegro last month.

President Tsereteli will continue his programme in Copenhagen on Thursday, with a meeting scheduled with Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod, who has previously served as Head of the Danish Delegation to the OSCE PA.

Current and former OSCE leaders focus on ways forward for the Organization at Helsingør retreat

The OSCE PA International Secretariat hosted on 7-8 September an informal brainstorming discussion to focus on the current OSCE leadership crisis and the future of the Organization. A number of OSCE experts who have served the Organization in different capacities over the years participated in the retreat, which took place in Helsingør, Denmark. The event served as an opportunity to stimulate debate and explore avenues for the PA to help overcome the current crisis, with a focus on synthesizing ideas into a practical course of action, leveraging the PA's political outreach and other added value.

Participating in the discussions were Amb. Christian Strohal, former Director of the OSCE/ODIHR; Ditmir Bushati, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairperson in Office and Head of the Albanian Delegation to the OSCE PA; Francois Heisbourg, Chair of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy; Isabel Santos, Member of the European Parliament and former OSCE PA Bureau member; Kent Härstedt former OSCE PA Vice-President; Ignacio Sánchez Amor, Member of the European Parliament and former OSCE PA Bureau member; and Douglas Wake, Senior Expert at OSCE Strategic Policy Support Unit.



Roberto Montella addresses colleagues at Helsingør retreat, 8 Sept.

On the OSCE PA's side, there was President George Tsereteli, Secretary General Roberto Montella, High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier, Deputy Secretaries General Gustavo Pallares and Andreas Nothelle, and advisors Francesco Pagani, Miodrag Panceski, Marco Bonabello, Guido Almerigogna, and Freyja Koci.

Participants focused on the general situation related to the high-level vacancies in the OSCE as well as other key long-standing issues related to the OSCE governance. The experts discussed ways to target the agenda of the OSCE and refocus key activities on OSCE core functions and processes.

Assembly President Tsereteli meets with OSCE PA staff at Copenhagen headquarters



President Tsereteli addresses OSCE PA staff, 9 Sept. 2020.

PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier joined Secretary General Roberto Montella for a meeting with OSCE PA staff on Wednesday. Discussions focused on the importance of resuming activities in light of the COVID-19 restrictions and the need for developing a strategy to help resolve the OSCE's institutional crisis.

Tsereteli noted that the importance of OSCE PA election observation was underlined recently by the lack of observers at last month's presidential election in Belarus. While observers could not deploy due to the pandemic, their absence may have had a real impact on the ground and therefore the Assembly should focus on resuming normal activities as soon as possible, Tsereteli said.

Zannier reported on talks that were held during a retreat this week in Helsingør focused on the OSCE's leadership crisis, highlighting the importance of synthesizing ideas into a programme that can be practically implemented. He stressed that ministers must be pushed to pay closer attention to the OSCE and ensure that it has the political support necessary to fulfill its mandate.