

OSCE PA at annual meeting of Chairperson-in-Office

Several representatives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly participated in the annual meeting between the Chairperson-in-Office and the OSCE Secretariat with the Heads of OSCE Field Operations and Institutions.

In meetings of the various regional groups on 15-16 January, Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Deputy Secretary General Tina Schön, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle and Liaison Officer Marc Carillet briefed the Heads of Missions and Institutions on upcoming OSCE PA activities as well as on the Assembly's priorities for the coming year. Also, the OSCE PA's Director of Communications Klas Bergman participated in a Press Roundtable in which the activities of the OSCE Press Office were discussed, including the launching of a new OSCE website.

The Chairperson-in-Office, Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, was accompanied by the Head of the OSCE PA's Greek Delegation, Panayotis Skandalakis. In her address to the Permanent Council, she emphasized the importance of "synergy, symmetry and strategy" in the OSCE's work, with

particular importance attached to peacefully resolving the region's protracted conflicts and enhancing the legal status of the OSCE.

Priorities in the politico-military dimension of the OSCE's work include promoting implementation of OSCE commitments on counter-terrorism as well as border security and policing.

In the economic and environmental dimension, the Chairmanship will focus on the challenges of migration as well as addressing the security aspects of environmental challenges, especially climate change. "Greening the OSCE" -- promoting environmental sustainability within the Organization -- will also be a focus.

Ms. Bakoyannis said that in the human dimension the Chairmanship would focus on strengthening the rule of law across the OSCE area, as well as promoting gender equality.

Mr. Oliver and Mr. Skandalakis held a private meeting with Ms. Bakoyannis on 15 January. Mr. Oliver also attended a working lunch with Heads of Institutions, Heads of Missions, the Chairperson-in-Office and her Special Representatives.



PA participates in OSCE forum on environment and economy

The Chairman of the OSCE PA's General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, Petros Efthymiou (Greece), former Minister for National Education and Religious Affairs, participated in the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Forum in Vienna on 19-20 January.

In discussions between experts from across the OSCE area, the Forum aimed at exploring ways in which migration management can be linked with economic, social and environmental policies.

The Forum was the first OSCE conference during the Greek OSCE Chairmanship and also the first under the leadership of the new OSCE Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, former Serbian Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic.

The OSCE PA has participated actively in the discussion on migration, passing two detailed resolutions during the 2008 Annual Session in Astana and by appointing a Special Representative on Migration as well as by debating the potential for future activities during the 2008 Fall Meetings in Toronto.

