

Ready for the 18th Annual Session in Vilnius

Meeting for the first time in a Baltic country, around 530 participants are getting ready for the 18th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 29 June to 3 July, hosted by the Parliament of Lithuania. Open to the media, the Session will take place in the Seimas (Parliament) in Vilnius.

Under the main theme of “The OSCE: Addressing New Security Challenges,” the OSCE parliamentarians will debate and vote on resolutions dealing with various aspects of security in the OSCE area. Those adopted will be incorporated into a final document, called the Vilnius Declaration, which will offer policy recommendations to OSCE participating States and will be distributed to all governments of the 56 OSCE countries.

Strengthening and reforming the OSCE, promoting human rights and civil liberties, energy and food security, climate change, freedom of expression, and arms control are some of the issues that will be considered by the parliamentarians from 50 OSCE countries. In addition, parliamentarians from Algeria, Jordan and Afghanistan are participating as

observers.

The call for strengthening and reforming the OSCE is made in a resolution with OSCE PA President Joao Soares (Portugal) as principal sponsor. The resolution is one of 24 to be debated, pending approval from the Assembly’s Standing Committee. Also, the Assembly’s Second and Third General Committees will consider resolutions dealing with economic, environmental and social consequences of the global financial crisis, presented by Ivor Callely (Ireland) and Natalia Karpovich (Russian Federation), respectively. The First Committee will consider



a resolution on food security, presented by Riccardo Migliori (Italy). OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Dora Bakoyannis will address a special plenary session on 30 June, and OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut will address the Standing Committee on 29 June.

A live video webcast of the Annual Session will be available on the OSCE PA website (www.oscepa.org) starting 29 June, courtesy of the Lithuanian Parliament.

Vice-President Grossruck appoints six deputies for elections in Albania

OSCE PA Vice-President Wolfgang Grossruck, a veteran election observer and head of the Assembly’s election observation mission to parliamentary elections in Albania on 28 June, has asked six parliamentarians to serve as his deputies and members of the mission’s Advisory Group.

The six are Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), Consiglio Di Nino (Canada), Alcee Hastings (U.S.), Christian Miesch (Switzerland), Riccardo Migliori (Italy), and Tone Tingsgaard (Sweden). All have extensive experience as election observers.

“As is usual practice in OSCE PA election observation missions, I hope to organize several meetings within the Advisory Group, while we all are in Tirana, to share impressions and make sure that our conclusions are co-ordinated and correct,” said Mr. Grossruck when appointing his deputies.

Mr. Grossruck (Austria), who arrived this week in Albania for the mission, has also been appointed Special Co-ordinator by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to lead the OSCE short term observer mission. He led the Assembly’s pre-assessment visit to Tirana on 8 and 9 June. That delegation included the PA’s Special Representative on South East Europe, Roberto Battelli.

The Parliamentary Assembly’s election observation mission consists of 37 participants from 15 countries.

Soares, Cardin to attend OSCE Ministerial in Corfu

President Joao Soares will lead a small delegation to the upcoming informal Ministerial meeting convened by the Greek Chairmanship in Corfu, 27-28 June. Vice-President Ben Cardin will also represent the Assembly at the meeting of Foreign Ministers, which will focus on “The Future of European Security.”

The delegation will include Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker, and Advisor Nuno Paixao from the Portuguese parliament.

Di Nino to lead election observation mission to Kyrgyzstan

Senator Consiglio Di Nino (Canada) has been appointed by President Joao Soares to lead the Parliamentary Assembly’s election observation mission to the presidential election in Kyrgyzstan on 23 July.

Senator Di Nino, who is the Head of Canada’s Delegation to the OSCE PA and Vice-Chair of its General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, has played a leading role in several observation missions in the past. In 2007, he led the Assembly’s observation mission to Kazakhstan where he also served as the OSCE Special Co-ordinator to lead the short term OSCE Observer Mission.