

News from Copenhagen

Soares, Tingsgaard and DeDonnea continue observation in Ukraine



Joao Soares, Donetsk Oblast Council Chairman Anatoliy Blyzniuk, Tone Tingsgaard and Francois-Xavier DeDonnea



President Joao Soares, Odesa Mayor Eduard Gurvits and Francois-Xavier DeDonnea

In a final week of preparation for the observation mission to the 17 January presidential election in Ukraine, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Joao Soares led a delegation to several regions of Ukraine. The delegation included the Deputy Heads of Mission that Mr. Soares has appointed for the regions: Francois-Xavier DeDonnea in Odesa and Tone Tingsgaard in Donetsk.

In both Odesa on 11 January and Donetsk on 12-13 January, the delegation met with local officials and regional representatives of Presidential candidates, as well as election officials and civil society representatives.

President Soares will observe the voting on election day in Kyiv and has appointed deputies to lead OSCE PA observer teams in regions throughout the country, including in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa and Simferopol. OSCE PA observers will be thoroughly briefed in Kyiv later this week, before deploying around the country to observe on election day itself. The OSCE observation mission, comprising both the OSCE PA and OSCE ODIHR, works in close co-operation with parliamentarians from the Council of Europe, NATO, and the European Parliament.

In Odesa and Donetsk, the delegation met with

representatives of District Election Commissions, which have been playing a key role in preparations for the election on 17 January, and with local political activists on behalf of candidates. The delegation was briefed by ODIHR long-term observers who have been in the two regions for more than one month, and who provided strong support to the delegation. In Odesa, the President and his team also met with the Mayor of the city, Mr. Eduard Gurvits, and in Donetsk, with the Chairman of the Oblast Council, Mr. Anatoli Blyzniuk.

Mr. Soares now returns to Kyiv to lead the OSCE short-term observers and to deliver the post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE at a press conference on Monday. He has been appointed OSCE Special Co-ordinator for the election by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev.

The President also was in Kyiv in November 2009, at which time he met with many of the candidates in the election as well as with representatives of the Parliament, Central Election Commission, Supreme Court, media and civil society.

The delegation was accompanied by Anna Chernova and Andreas Baker from the International Secretariat and Nuno Paixao from the Portuguese Parliament.

Norwegian OSCE PA delegation visits Copenhagen Secretariat



Spencer Oliver welcomes the Norwegian delegation to the International Secretariat

The new head of Norway's delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and six delegates paid a visit to the International Secretariat in Copenhagen on 11 January. The Norwegian group contained several new members of the OSCE PA delegation, including the new head, Snorre

Serigstad Valen, as well as the two delegation secretaries, Lisbeth Merete Stock and Bjornar Dahl Hotvedt.

The delegates were received by OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and senior staff, who briefed them on the Assembly's work. The meetings were also an opportunity to acquaint the parliamentarians, especially those new to the OSCE PA delegation, with the staff of the International Secretariat.

The PA's activities for the coming year were discussed, with particular attention given to the OSCE election observation mission to Ukraine, in which three Norwegian parliamentarians will participate.

The day-long meetings also included a special session on the preparations for the Annual Session 6 to 10 July, which will be hosted by the Norwegian Storting, and a meeting with the International Secretariat's Research Fellows.