

News from Copenhagen

Preparations underway for two election observation missions



Hasim Kilic, Chairman of Turkey's Constitutional Court, discusses freedom of expression with Secretary General Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA continues preparations for two election observation missions this month, to Turkey and to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhiev and Deputy Director for Field Operations Roberto Montella visited Ankara and Istanbul earlier this week to meet with high-ranking officials and representatives of political parties in preparation for parliamentary elections in Turkey on 12 June.

In meetings with Ali Em, Chair of the Supreme Board of Elections; Kaan Esener, the Foreign Ministry's Deputy Director for the Council of Europe and Human Rights; Osman Koruturk, Vice-Chair of the CHP Party; Salih Kapusuz, Vice-President of the AK Party; Cagir Erhan, Vice-Chair of HAS Party; as well as media representatives and members of civil society, Mr. Oliver indicated that the OSCE PA teams will provide a fair and objective assessment based on the 1990 Copenhagen commitments.

The delegation also met with ODIHR representative Tana de Zulueta, as well as with Turkey's OSCE PA Head of Delegation Alaattin Buyukkaya and Vice-Chair of the First Committee Canan Kalsin, who, although leaving the Assembly following the election, are assisting the Secretariat with the election observation mission.

The OSCE PA's election observation mission to Turkey is being led by Danish MP Pia Christmas-Moeller, a Vice-President of the Assembly, who will deliver the post-election statement at a press conference in Ankara on 13 June.

PA staff members are also in Skopje this week preparing for the 5 June parliamentary elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), the OSCE PA's Special Representative for South East Europe, will lead the international election observation mission and deliver the post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE at a press conference in Skopje on 6 June.

"I look forward to observing the rest of the campaign period and would be happy if, on the day after the vote, I would be able to report about a peaceful and clean election," said Mr. Battelli, who was appointed by the Chair-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observer mission.

The OSCE PA observers will be joined by approximately 200 short-term observers from OSCE participating States to form the short-term OSCE election observer mission and will be supported by long-term observers of the OSCE/ODIHR already on the ground.

Ambassador Andreas Nothelle and Communications Director Neil Simon are involved with both the Turkey and FYROM election observation missions. Also assisting in the FYROM mission are Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker, Logistics Officer Iryna Sabashuk and Liaison Officer Marc Carillet. Programme Officer Anna Chernova and Research Fellows Jana Fikri and Kamiel Mesie are assisting in Turkey.

In both missions the OSCE PA is working closely with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, deploying parliamentary observers throughout the countries.

CiO nominates Plassnik for SG; ODIHR Director extended

On Monday, the foreign ministers of the 56 OSCE participating States agreed to the reappointment of Ambassador Janez Lenarcic of Slovenia as the director of the OSCE/ODIHR for a term of three years, beginning on 1 July. It will be Ambassador Lenarcic's second and final term. He was appointed ODIHR director in July 2008.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver congratulated Mr.

Lenarcic on his reappointment and invited him to the Annual Session to be held in Belgrade on 6-10 July.

Also on Monday, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis, sent a letter to the 56 foreign ministers of OSCE participating States asking for consensus on the nomination of Ursula Plassnik of Austria for the position of OSCE Secretary General.