

News from Copenhagen

President Kanerva holds high-level discussions in Ukraine



OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (left) alongside Verkhovna Rada Chair Volodymyr Groysman at a press conference following their meeting, 6 February.



OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (left) during his meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, 6 February.

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) met last week with Verkhovna Rada Chairperson Volodymyr Groysman, Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin and other senior parliamentary and government officials in Kyiv for discussions that focused on the status of efforts to resolve the crisis in and around Ukraine.

The recent escalation of fighting in the east of the country, border security, international support for Ukraine and the humanitarian situation on the ground were among the issues considered.

President Kanerva also met with the Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada's Committee on National Security and Defense, Serhiy Pashynskiy, as well as with the members of the newly appointed Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA. He also observed a plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada and gave an interview on Rada TV, the official television channel of the Ukrainian Parliament.

"The window is closing for a diplomatic solution to this crisis and the international community must not let it slam

shut. In my meetings with Chairperson Groysman and Foreign Minister Klimkin I reaffirmed that the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly see no alternative to diplomacy – but success requires finding a way to convince Russia to distance itself from the separatists' illegal activities and mend its broken OSCE commitments. What remains non-negotiable is Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and legitimate right to defend itself," Kanerva said.

Meetings with parliamentary leaders also included discussion of the new Verkhovna Rada's legislative priorities and continuing reform efforts.

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Ismo Soukola, the Deputy Head of the Finnish Delegation to the OSCE PA, Special Advisor to the President Konsta Heikkila and OSCE PA Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk also participated in the meetings in Kyiv, which took place 6 February.

The OSCE's response to the crisis in and around Ukraine will be the topic of a special debate at the PA's Winter Meeting, held on 18-20 February in Vienna.

Visits to International Secretariat focus on Assembly work, upcoming events



Edvins Snore (right) meets with OSCE PA staff on 6 February.

Visitors to the OSCE PA headquarters in Copenhagen over the past week have included the new Head of the OSCE PA's Latvian Delegation, Edvins Snore, the Secretary of the Latvian Delegation, Igors Aizstrauts, the Ambassador of Romania to Denmark, Matei Viorel Ardeleanu, and Member of the Danish Delegation to the PA Lars Barfoed, who is a former chair of the Conservative Party in Denmark.

In meetings with Secretariat staff and representatives of OSCE PA delegations, discussions focused on upcoming



Secretary General Spencer Oliver (left) and Member of the Danish Delegation Lars Barfoed, 10 February.

events including the PA's Winter Meeting in Vienna on 18-20 February, election observation activities, OSCE PA communication strategies and the importance of the active involvement of parliamentary delegations in the PA's activities, including the hosting of meetings. Gratitude was expressed in particular to the Danish Parliament for its generosity in providing the PA its headquarters. Political situations in Latvia, Romania and Denmark were also discussed, with the visitors sharing perspectives on various issues.