

Preparations continue for election observation in United Kingdom, Turkey

The International Secretariat is continuing preparations for the deployment of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly election observers to upcoming elections in the United Kingdom and in Turkey.

More than 40 parliamentarians and staff from nearly 20 countries intend to observe the 7 May general elections in the UK, under the leadership of Vice-President George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia), who has been appointed by OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Serbia Ivica Dacic to serve as OSCE Special Co-ordinator for the short-term observer mission.

OSCE parliamentary observers will participate in briefings in London organized by the International Secretariat ahead of election day, engaging with experts, representatives of various political parties, members of the media and others. Observers will then deploy to polling stations in several regions of the United Kingdom to observe voting and counting.

The 7 May election observation mission comes five years after the OSCE PA's observation of the previous general elections in the UK, in May 2010. That mission concluded that

the vote demonstrated the country's enduring commitment to democracy, while noting that reform of the complex electoral system may be needed, and expressed concern that voters waiting in line at the time polling stations closed were denied the chance to cast their ballots.

For the 7 June parliamentary elections in Turkey, the OSCE PA mission will be led by Vice-President Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene (MP, Lithuania) and Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain), Special Representative on OSCE Border Issues and Deputy Head of the Spanish Delegation to the OSCE PA. Vice-President Aleknaite Abramikiene has been appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to serve as OSCE Special Co-ordinator for the short-term observer mission, while Sanchez Amor will serve as Head of the OSCE PA mission.

In preparation for the deployment of the parliamentary observers to Turkey, Director of Elections Andreas Baker visited Ankara and Istanbul from 13-17 April as part of a Needs Assessment Mission deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR. Baker is responsible for the general co-ordination of both the UK and Turkey election observation missions.

SG Oliver meets with Austrian Ambassador Peter Brezovsky



Ambassador Peter Brezovsky and Secretary General Spencer Oliver meeting at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen.

The Austrian Ambassador to Denmark, Peter Brezovsky, paid a visit to the OSCE PA's International Secretariat in Copenhagen on Tuesday, where he and Secretary General Spencer Oliver held wide-ranging discussions on OSCE-related issues, including the general security environment on the European continent, as well as the upcoming visit of Danish Speaker of Parliament Mogens Lykketoft to Vienna.

Oliver expressed gratitude on behalf of the Assembly for the generous support that Austria provides to the OSCE PA, particularly by hosting its Liaison Office in Vienna and offering support to the holding of the Winter Meeting every year. Amb. Brezovsky was instrumental in arranging support for the OSCE PA's Liaison Office when it was established in Vienna 12 years ago.

DSG Pallares briefs OSCE PA's Swedish Delegation in Stockholm



Kent Harstedt, seated at the end of the table, opens the meeting alongside Gustavo Pallares.

OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares was in Stockholm on Wednesday to meet with the OSCE PA's Swedish Delegation, led by Head of Delegation and Vice-President Kent Harstedt. At the request of the Delegation, which includes some newly appointed members, Pallares provided a briefing on the current work of the Assembly, with a particular focus on the proceedings of the Annual Session.

Pallares discussed the work of the three general committees, including the process of drafting, amending and adopting resolutions, as well as the election of officers. He described other upcoming activities of the Assembly, including the Autumn Meeting to be held this September in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and fielded questions from the parliamentarians on a variety of subjects.