

Bureau meets in Brussels, recommends Kazakhstan for 2008 Annual Session



Convening in Brussels on 3 December, prior to the OSCE Ministerial Council, the OSCE PA Bureau met to discuss Assembly activities. Bureau Members also participated in the meeting of Foreign Ministers from the OSCE participating States on 4 and 5 December.

President Lennmarker gave Members a brief overview of his activities, including expected upcoming events. The Bureau was also welcomed by the Head of the Belgian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Anne-Marie Lizin, President of the Belgian Senate.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht, addressed the meeting, and informed Members about discussions taking place on the various draft Ministerial decisions. He noted that a number of issues were being discussed in the ongoing debates about reforming the Organization, and discussed co-operation on OSCE election observation missions. Regarding future work, he urged continued focus on addressing 'frozen conflicts' in the OSCE area, and increased focus on energy security issues.

Regarding future meetings, the Bureau discussed potential themes for the 2007 Annual Session to be held in July in Kyiv, and recommended that the 2008 Annual Session be held in Almaty, following an invitation from authorities in Kazakhstan.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver gave an overview of the work of the International Secretariat. He noted that the Assembly continues to function well, and that the Secretariat had again received a positive assessment from external auditors. Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna, updated Members on the status of documents being prepared for the Ministerial Council meeting.

Visit by representative of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 30 November and 1 December, the Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Vadim Kuznetsov, visited the International Secretariat in Copenhagen. Ambassador Kuznetsov met with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and other staff to consider areas for increased co-operation with OSCE parliamentarians.

The two-day visit was arranged to further explore avenues for co-operation between the Assembly and OSCE field missions. Ambassador Kuznetsov was briefed on the structures and work of the Assembly, including in particular work being conducted in the field.

Mr. Kuznetsov explained that the OSCE Mission is interested in increased engagement with parliamentarians both within Bosnia and Herzegovina, and from across the OSCE region. He outlined the structures of the OSCE Mission, which has an extensive field presence throughout the country. The Ambassador described some of the major issues which the Mission is engaged with, including in the fields of education and democratisation, and monitoring of the courts system. He noted that with the expected closing of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE will continue to play an important role in the country.



The Secretary General and Ambassador Kuznetsov discussed ways in which OSCE PA Members could contribute to overcoming some of the political difficulties faced in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the moment.

Originally established in 1995, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has its head office in Sarajevo, and has four Regional Centres in Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla, as well as 21 Field Offices throughout the country.