

News from Copenhagen

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Kazakhstan's OSCE Ambassador holds talks in Copenhagen



Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov

Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative and Head of Mission of Kazakhstan to the OSCE, held talks at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen on 7 October. It was the second visit the Ambassador had made to Assembly headquarters since assuming his post as Kazakhstan's Permanent Representative in Vienna.

The discussions with Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Secretariat staff dealt with Kazakhstan's plans and preparations for next year, when it serves as the OSCE Chair-in-Office, and the continued work of Kazakhstan in building democracy in the country. Ambassador Adrakhmanov expressed his country's appreciation for the PA's support

of the Kazakh Chairmanship, and promised close co-operation between the incoming CiO and the Parliamentary Assembly.

The Ambassador expressed Kazakhstan's interest in reforming and strengthening the OSCE and specifically requested a copy of the recommendations put forward by the OSCE PA Colloquium on the Future of the OSCE held in 2005.

He emphasized that the OSCE must "upgrade its competence and role" to remain an effective international organization.

The priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship, the Ambassador said, include furthering the Corfu process, protecting national minorities and promoting tolerance, countering international terrorism, and addressing climate change as part of the overall OSCE agenda. The case of Yevgeniy Zhovtis, the Kazakh human rights activist sentenced to four years in prison for vehicular manslaughter, was also addressed, along with other issues that may confront the Kazakh Chairmanship, including freedom of the press and electoral reform.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov was accompanied by Shynar Zakieva, first secretary at Kazakhstan's OSCE mission in Vienna.

Tingsgaard urges continued action on gender equality

Tone Tingsgaard (Sweden), the Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on Gender Issues, has urged OSCE States to ensure that each government "promotes women into high level positions in the OSCE and supports them throughout the recruitment process."

In her speech on 1 October to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, Ms. Tingsgaard said she was happy that gender equality was being discussed at the gathering. She said that progress exists regarding employment within the OSCE, but it is slow. Nineteen percent of women in high level positions is not impressive, she noted, but it is an improvement over where we were a few years ago.

Ms. Tingsgaard said that she had "repeatedly pointed out my regrets" over failed opportunities to make positive changes in our Organization, despite the fact that both the Secretary General of the OSCE and the Director of OSCE ODIHR have

called for positive action to promote women candidates in order to live up to the commitments agreed by the Ministerial Council in the Gender Action Plan from 2004.

"But I must also add," she said, "that if there has been improvement over the years, it has happened because of pressure. If we want change, if we really want change, we cannot just wait for things to happen or for others to act."

On the parliamentary side, she highlighted the many resolutions on gender balance that the PA has passed at its Annual Sessions.



Tone Tingsgaard

Kozlovskiy meets with Secretary General at the Secretariat

Aleksander Kozlovskiy, Head of the Russian Federation's Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, visited the Assembly's headquarters in Copenhagen on 5 October.

His talks with Secretary General Spencer Oliver focused on the future work of the Parliamentary Assembly and on the need for robust participation in Assembly activities by

Russian parliamentarians.

They also discussed the full range of OSCE issues as well as the problems that could jeopardize the future of the Organization.

Mr. Kozlovskiy visited Copenhagen also in his capacity as Vice-President of the European Olympic Committee.