

OSCE Parliamentarians visit Kyrgyzstan



Coskun Coruz, Pauline Meurs, Walburga Habsburg Douglas, Klaas Dijkhoff and Kathleen Ferrier at a political party forum in Bishkek

OSCE PA Vice-President Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden) and Third Committee Rapporteur Coskun Coruz (The Netherlands) led discussions about the role of parliamentarians in ensuring election transparency during an OSCE-organized forum in Kyrgyzstan on 10 September.

Members of parliament and political experts discussed how parliamentarians can contribute to conducting free, fair and inclusive elections. The event was jointly organized by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, the non-governmental organization Parliament of Political Parties and Kyrgyzstan's Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh).

"Parliamentarians have a key role to play in the election process at large. They are guarantors of democracy," said Mr.

Coruz, Rapporteur of the OSCE PA's General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.

Ms. Habsburg Douglas, who has been appointed by Lithuanian Foreign Minister and OSCE Chair-in-Office Audronius Azubalis to lead the short term OSCE observer mission to Kyrgyzstan next month, held meetings with President Roza Otunbayeva, Speaker of the Parliament Akhmatbek Keldibekov, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kazakbaev Ruslan Aitbaevich, as well as the Central Election Commission.

"The relationship between the executive and legislature is critical to ensuring transparency in government," said Vice-President Habsburg Douglas. "I look forward to the election observation mission with hope that it will build on progress already made in Kyrgyzstan in line with OSCE commitments."

The programme in Kyrgyzstan included a roundtable discussion with political parties as well as briefings by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek.

Also participating in OSCE PA delegation was Special Representative on Migration Kathleen Ferrier, as well as Klaas Dijkhoff and Pauline Meurs, Members of the Dutch Parliament. Programme Director Anna Chernova from the International Secretariat and Arjen Westerhoff from the Dutch Parliament supported the visit.

VP Migliori launches election observation in Tunisia

Vice-President Riccardo Migliori (Italy) visited Tunisia, an OSCE Mediterranean Partner State, from 6 to 9 September in his capacity as Head of the OSCE PA election observers for the upcoming elections of the National Constituent Assembly scheduled for 23 October.

In meetings with national authorities, leaders of political parties, members of civil society and representatives of international organizations working in Tunis, Mr. Migliori stressed that the observation mission is an opportunity for Tunisia to take advantage of OSCE PA's election expertise and that as observers, OSCE parliamentarians are strictly neutral.

The OSCE PA delegation's visit was warmly welcomed by all interlocutors who conveyed their gratitude for the attention being paid to political developments in North Africa.

Mr. Migliori is planning a second pre-election visit for the end of September in the southern part of the country in order to visit rural areas of Tunisia and to observe the beginning of the election campaign activities.

Accompanying Mr. Migliori was OSCE PA Deputy Director of Field Operations Roberto Montella, and Pia Califano and Vincenzo Picciolo from the Italian Parliament.

Full programme for OSCE PA Fall Meetings in Dubrovnik

More than 200 OSCE Parliamentarians from 48 participating States are expected to participate in the OSCE PA Fall Meetings in Dubrovnik on 7-10 October. Hosted by the Croatian Parliament, the meetings will include a parliamentary conference on "Regional Development in South-East Europe: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects," a Standing Committee meeting, and a Mediterranean Forum.

A special debate on "The Role of the OSCE in Conflict Resolution: Nagorno-Karabakh" will be moderated by the newly appointed Special Representative on the South Caucasus, OSCE PA President Emeritus Joao Soares. Keynote speakers for the debate include Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.

Also addressing the Fall Meetings will be PA President Petros Efthymiou, Croatian President Ivo Josipović, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebic, and Head of the PA's Croatian Delegation Tonino Picula. OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier is speaking at the Mediterranean Forum and will brief the Standing Committee on the proposed OSCE budget for 2012.