

News from Copenhagen

High-level PA delegation at OSCE Ministerial Council builds dialogue



OSCE PA President George Tsereteli meets OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Sebastian Kurz at the Ministerial Council, 7 Dec. 2017.



OSCE PA Treasurer Doris Barnett and Special Rep. Andreas Nothelle speak with SG Thomas Greminger, 6 Dec. 2017.

Fifteen senior Members of the Assembly were in Vienna last week for the OSCE's 24th Ministerial Council and an OSCE PA Bureau meeting that was held on 6 December. OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) addressed the opening session on 7 December and held a series of bilateral meetings on the margins of the Ministerial Council. PA Members also participated in a number of side events during the two-day meeting and met with foreign ministers, ambassadors, heads of OSCE institutions and other senior officials.

In his speech at the opening session, President Tsereteli noted the value and potential of the OSCE, stressing that governments should ensure that the organization is fully equipped to handle challenges facing the region.

"In increasingly critical times, governments should make the best use of the OSCE," the President said to the foreign ministers of the OSCE's 57 participating States. "It is a unique platform that does no less than serve our collective security which deserves to be nurtured, supported and provided with necessary financial, human and material resources."

The President pointed out that comprehensive security requires equal attention to all its dimensions, including the economic and environmental. He emphasized the value of OSCE field work and urged renewed attention to conflict mediation, stressing that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine must be dealt with.

On the margins, Tsereteli met with Austrian Speaker of Parliament Elisabeth Kostinger, OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, Italian Foreign Minister Angelino



Members of the OSCE PA Bureau attend the OSCE Ministerial Council, 7 Dec. 2017.

Alfano, German Special Representative for the OSCE Gernot Erler, Spanish Deputy Foreign Minister Ildelfonso Castro López, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldayev, Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmet Yıldız, and Israeli

Ambassador to the OSCE Talya Lador-Fresher.

With Speaker Kostinger, President Tsereteli expressed his appreciation for Austria's hospitality and the support over the years of the Assembly's work, including by hosting the PA's Liaison Office in Vienna.

Meeting with OSCE Secretary General Greminger, Tsereteli said that parliamentarians can help build a strong OSCE by advocating for greater resources and building public support for the Organization. In addition to the OSCE Secretary General, Tsereteli met with Director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir, Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Desir, and High Commissioner on National Minorities Lamberto Zannier.

In a meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Alfano, Tsereteli expressed the Parliamentary Assembly's support for the incoming Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE. The sides discussed concrete ways to promote efficient and effective co-operation in 2018. Tsereteli also spoke at a Meeting of the OSCE Troika with the Asian Partners for Co-operation, noting that in recent years the PA's co-operation with Asian Partners has intensified.

Meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, President Tsereteli raised issues including migration, terrorism, protracted conflicts and the upcoming elections in the Russian Federation. In the meeting with Spanish Deputy Foreign Minister Castro López, the sides discussed ongoing political issues in Spain, including the upcoming regional elections in Catalonia.

Tsereteli welcomed Kyrgyzstan's engagement with the PA in a meeting with Foreign Minister Abdyldayev. Discussions focused primarily on last October's presidential election in Kyrgyzstan and next year's OSCE PA Autumn Meeting to be held in Bishkek.

While in Vienna, Tsereteli also had conversations with the foreign ministers of Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Canada, Iceland, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A conversation with United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson focused on the value of U.S. support for the OSCE.