

News from Copenhagen

President Tsereteli addresses OSCE media conference in Tbilisi

OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) participated last week in the 15th annual South Caucasus Media Conference organized by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Titled “Quality Journalism for Trustworthy and Credible Information,” the conference brought together more than 60 participants representing government authorities, media, civil society and academia in Tbilisi, to exchange views on recent changes in the media landscape that have taken place in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

In his opening remarks, the President noted that propaganda and disinformation have been around for centuries, but that through new technologies and a lack of appreciation by the wider public of the varying quality of journalistic work, there is now an increased risk of damaging the credibility of journalism as a whole.

Warning that the use of “fake news” as a political tool poses a danger to democracy, Tsereteli noted that everyone benefits from ensuring high professional media standards. He pointed out that journalists and politicians should work together in the interests of good journalism and democracy.

Tsereteli highlighted the OSCE PA’s Berlin Declaration, adopted at the close of the 27th Annual Session, which urges



action “to combat the growing prevalence of disinformation and propaganda by promoting high-quality journalism, developing norms and standards that apply equally to both traditional and digital platforms and encourage accurate and diverse media content.”

Participants in the Tbilisi conference included Italy’s Ambassador to Georgia Antonio Enrico Bartoli, representing the Italian OSCE Chairmanship, Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani, and Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The conference took place 18-19 July.

Tsereteli and Désir held a bilateral meeting on the margins of the conference in which they discussed strengthening co-operation, engaging parliamentarians in countries with media freedom issues and where the safety of journalists is under threat, and strengthening legal frameworks.

OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna briefs governmental side on Annual Session

The OSCE PA’s Special Representative in Vienna, Amb. Andreas Nothelle, last week briefed the OSCE Permanent Council and an Informal Meeting for participating States and Partners for Co-operation on the outcomes of the 27th Annual Session, which took place 7-11 July in Berlin.

The Special Representative expressed gratitude to Germany for hosting the Annual Session, and pointed out that it featured a large number of side events and meetings including the Working Lunch on Gender Issues, an event on the Structured Dialogue organized by the Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE, and meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism.

Highlighting the scope of the Annual Session, with nearly 300 members of parliament from 53 participating States and four Partners for Co-operation, Amb. Nothelle noted that topics of debate included the crisis in and around Ukraine, the situation in Abkhazia (Georgia) and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia (Georgia) and other protracted conflicts, human rights violations, connectivity through transport and trade facilitation, the environmental impacts of war, rebuilding trust in the OSCE area, and human trafficking.

The Annual Session culminated in the adoption of the Berlin Declaration, Amb. Nothelle said, consisting of the



three committee resolutions and 16 supplementary items. He noted that in the document’s 74 pages there is a wealth of recommendations in all three dimensions of the OSCE’s work. “Altogether, they constitute an important contribution to the discussions in this hall and could serve as valuable input into your preparations for the Milan MC,” Amb. Nothelle said at the Permanent Council meeting on 19 July. The Declaration was circulated to all delegations in Vienna ahead of Amb. Nothelle’s briefing.

Many participants at the Permanent Council, including several ambassadors, demonstrated a high level of interest in the PA’s activities and offered comments noting that the outcomes of the Annual Session could be used as important input to OSCE discussions.

OSCE PA President George Tsereteli is expected to address the OSCE Permanent Council on 11 October.