

News from Copenhagen

Meeting leaders of Uzbekistan, President Muttonen discusses reforms, co-operation



OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen concluded on Wednesday a three-day visit to Uzbekistan, during which she discussed the country's ongoing reforms and potential areas for co-operation with the OSCE and the PA.

"Uzbekistan is an essential partner to tackle our joint challenges, and I am glad that Tashkent has decided to address these by strengthening its engagement with the OSCE," said Muttonen. "Uzbekistan has also outlined an enterprising reform programme, and the OSCE stands ready to assist the country in implementing these ambitious efforts."

The 2017-2021 Action Strategy for the Development of Uzbekistan outlines five priority areas, including good governance, respect for the rule of law, the liberalization of the economy, strengthening civil society, and the implementation of balanced and constructive foreign relations. The reforms also aim to empower the country's legislature through greater parliamentary oversight and the introduction of a dialogue

mechanism between citizens and members of parliament.

President Muttonen met on Monday with Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Nurdinjon Ismoilov, Deputy Chairperson of the Senate Svetlana Artikova, and Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov.

For the first time since 2002, a delegation from Uzbekistan participated in a meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in February 2017 in Vienna, and this was the first visit to Uzbekistan by a President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in more than a decade. The visit provided an opportunity for the President to exchange views on a number of priority topics on the OSCE PA's agenda including engagement with national minorities, regional co-operation and combating terrorism.

President Muttonen highlighted the effective work of the OSCE's full-time presence in the country, the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, and encouraged the authorities to continue to make use of the office's capacities to promote experience-sharing dialogue in support of OSCE commitments. She also participated in the opening of the OSCE's annual Central Asia Regional Heads of Field Operations Meeting.

Muttonen was accompanied on the visit by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, Chief of the Executive Office Andreas Baker, Presidential Adviser Loic Poulain, and Senior Adviser Lukas Mussi from the Austrian Parliament.

Leinsweiler seminar considers impacts of geopolitical competition on security

An OSCE PA seminar held this weekend in Leinsweiler, Germany, focused on the question of how the resurgence of nationalism and the renewed competition for geopolitical spheres of influence is impacting security in the OSCE area, particularly in South East Europe. Hosted by the German Delegation to the OSCE PA, the seminar addressed specific themes related to collective security, economic co-operation, political institutions and social cohesion.

OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen opened the seminar on Saturday noting that new tensions have arisen in the OSCE's recent past that threaten to erode safeguards in place to prevent major conflicts. In her opening remarks, OSCE PA Treasurer and Head of the German Delegation Doris Barnett noted the importance of inter-parliamentary dialogue in promoting solutions to ongoing problems, which she said can help support governments in building a more peaceful world.

Bringing together 22 members of parliament from 13 countries, the Leinsweiler seminar also included representatives from the OSCE's governmental side and executive structures, as well as other European institutions.

Deputy OSCE Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs Ralf Ernst and Morten Jung of the Western Balkans Directorate of the EU Commission spoke at

the session on economic co-operation, while OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre Director Amb. Marcel Pesko addressed the session dealing with impacts on collective security concepts and established security mechanisms.



Sessions were chaired by OSCE/ODIHR Director Michael Georg Link, OSCE PA Vice-President Kent Harstedt (MP, Sweden), Rapporteur for the OSCE PA's Committee on Political Affairs and Security Margareta Cederfelt (MP, Sweden), and Chair of the OSCE PA's Parliamentary Team on Moldova Arta Dade (MP, Albania).

Upcoming events and deadlines

OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen is hosting a Retreat on National Minorities in Villach, Austria, on **29-30 May 2017**. OSCE PA Members are welcome to register by **12 May** at osce-pv@parlament.gv.at.