

President Muttonen concludes visit to Eastern and Central Asia



Kairat Abdrakhmanov and Christine Muttonen, Astana, 14 June 2017 (Photo courtesy of Kazakh MFA)

OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) wrapped up a week-long visit to Eastern and Central Asia with meetings in southern Kazakhstan late last week. She met Friday in Shymkent with Zhanseit Tuimebayev, the Akim of the South Kazakhstan region, followed by meetings with the Association of Business Women and Commission for Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy. On Saturday, she visited the Otrar district.

The President addressed nearly 200 officials and civil society representatives on 15 June at the opening of the Second Preparatory Meeting of the Annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Astana, held under the theme "Green economy as catalyst for sustainable development, security and stability." In her keynote address, the President discussed the challenges posed by climate change, particularly in Central Asia where the exhaustion of fresh water and a destabilized agricultural sector pose a potential threat to food and water security.

Accompanied by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, Muttonen's visit to Kazakhstan included meetings with Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan and Head of Kazakhstan's Delegation to the PA. She also met with the Chairman of the Mazhilis of the

Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nurlan Nigmatulin and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov.

In her meeting with Foreign Minister Abdrakhmanov, the President noted Kazakhstan's effective leadership in numerous areas, expressing gratitude in particular for its efforts to combat climate change by promoting transition to renewable sources of energy and through greening the economy. The President and the Foreign Minister exchanged views on the impact of these topics on security, stability and prosperity.

Discussions with Kazakh officials also focused on the emergence of Kazakhstan as a key player in the region, in particular regarding international mediation and confidence-building efforts. President Muttonen was also briefed on Kazakhstan's counter-terrorism work and its efforts to enhance regional co-operation, along with other international initiatives.

Muttonen also participated last week with Ambassadors Raunig and Zugic in the opening of the OSCE pavilion at the Astana EXPO 2017 under the theme "Future energy" along with Foreign Minister Abdrakhmanov and OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Amb. Madina Jarbussynova. In addition, she participated in the opening of the Austrian EXPO pavilion.

President Muttonen's visit began in Beijing on 12 June, where she met with representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the International Department of the Communist Party of China. She was supported on her visit by Lukas Mussi and Brigitte Brenner from the Austrian Parliament and Francesco Pagani from the International Secretariat.

Special Representative Nothelle shares PA's views on Code of Conduct

Addressing the Sixth Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security on 14 June in Vienna, OSCE PA Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle reiterated the importance that parliamentarians attach to democratic control of the public and private security sectors and all other aspects of the Code of Conduct.

Recalling that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was actively involved in its creation, Amb. Nothelle noted that Assembly declarations have consistently called on participating States to fully implement the Code of Conduct. He stressed in particular declarations from 1995 in Ottawa, 1996 in Stockholm, 1997 in Warsaw, 1999 in St. Petersburg, 2000 in Bucharest, 2001 in Paris, 2002 in Berlin, 2004 in Edinburgh, 2006 in Brussels, 2008 in Astana, 2011 in Belgrade, and, most comprehensively, 2014 in Baku.

In its declarations, the OSCE PA has consistently affirmed that military capacity and actions must be defined by democratic procedures, Nothelle said. Failure to implement commitments under the Code contributes to an erosion of confidence between participating States, and of citizens in their governments, he stressed. Therefore, he said, good democratic governance in the security sector is vital for sustainable democratic systems, a role that parliamentarians can fill by ensuring parliamentary oversight as well as more effective use of the institutions in place.

The Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security has taken place since 2012, following a decision taken by the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation in 2011 to regularly assess, review and if necessary improve the implementation of the Code of Conduct.