
OSCE SUPPORTS GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIA COUNTRIES AND AFGHANISTAN

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OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) on September 12 in Tashkent spoke at the seminar on the Role of Parliaments in engaging Afghanistan into Central Asian Cooperation Frameworks through Preventive Diplomacy by the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

In his speech on the role of regional parliamentary co-operation in implementation of preventive diplomacy and the role of Afghanistan in the political development of Central Asia, Vice-President Guliyev noted that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is well positioned to exert preventive diplomacy.

Parliamentarians, he said, can open doors which only politicians can open and the PA has a variety of instruments at its disposal to increase engagement with particular countries or regions and to promote parliamentarism. MPs also enjoy a greater degree of freedom to launch public debates or make public statements on sensitive topics, thus testing public opinion and leading the way, before governments are ready to take an official stance, Guliyev said.

Stressing the unique role played by members of parliament in the political decision-making process and public life in their respective countries, Guliyev noted MPs possess a broad range of tools and mechanisms to address the various types of crises and to contribute to post-conflict rebuilding and promote political dialogue at the level of parliaments, political parties and civil society.

Guliyev drew the attention of the participants to the fact that Afghanistan has been an Asian Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since 2003 and borders three OSCE participating States (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). A special debate on Afghanistan was held in 2010 as well.

He also talked about mutual activities of the Central Asian States and the Assembly, noting that parliamentarians from these countries are very active in Assembly activities, including in election observation. There have also been several positive tendencies regarding co-operation, including the visit by then-President of the PA Christine Muttonen to Tashkent in May 2017, which was the first visit to Uzbekistan by a PA President in more than a decade.

Guliyev informed the participants on the relevant ad hoc groups, Special Representatives and also Assembly resolutions regarding Afghanistan adopted by the Assembly.

Afghanistan also participated in a number of statutory meetings of the OSCE PA, starting in 2009, Guliyev said. He noted that the OSCE provided assistance in the fields of border security, police training and combating drug trafficking for Afghanistan starting in 2007 and agreed to widen its engagement with Afghanistan, from the politico-military dimension to also include the economic and environmental dimension and the human dimension in 2011.

The Vice-President concluded his speech by noting that the entire OSCE family stands ready to continue its support in promoting greater co-operation and integration among the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan which have a common geography and history, as well as strong cultural ties and enormous economic potential for mutually beneficial joint projects toward achieving the goals of peace, sustainable development, stability and security.

In Tashkent, OSCE PA Vice-President Guliyev held meetings with the leadership of Uzbek Parliament and discussed the enhancing of future co-operation between the OSCE PA and the Parliament of Uzbekistan.

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