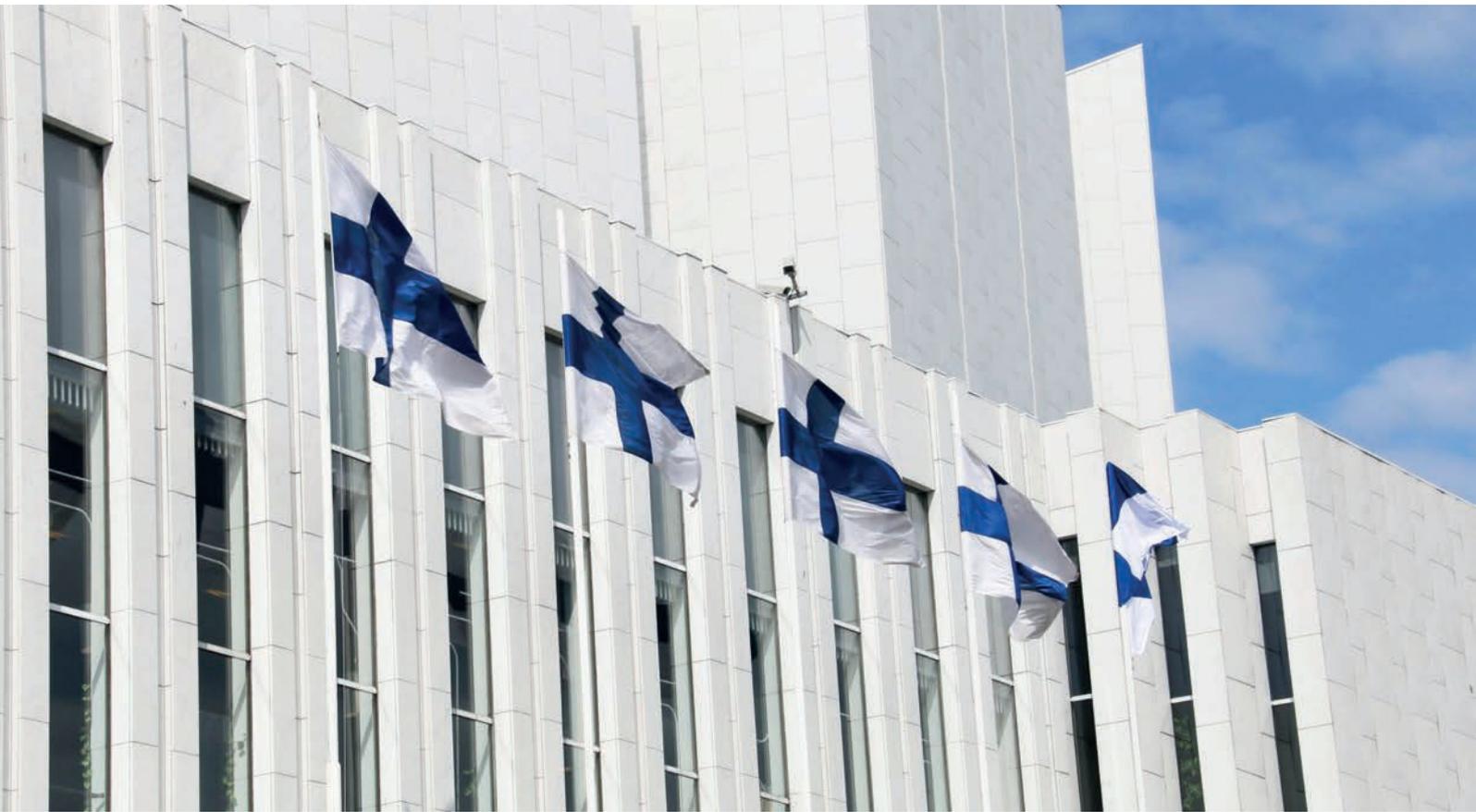


REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY'S 24TH ANNUAL SESSION HELSINKI, FINLAND



RECALLING THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI

OSCE PA

HELSINKI 5-9 JULY 2015



REPORT ON THE 24TH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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Prepared by the OSCE PA International Secretariat

Cover photo: Finlandia Hall in Helsinki



Summary



Hosted by the Finnish Parliament, the OSCE PA's 24th Annual Session took place at historic Finlandia Hall from 5 to 9 July 2015.

The 24th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly brought together nearly 300 parliamentarians in historic Finlandia Hall on 5-9 July 2015. The theme for the Session was “Recalling the Spirit of Helsinki,” a reference to the OSCE’s founding document, the Helsinki Final Act, which was signed in Finlandia Hall in 1975.

The Annual Session culminated in the adoption of the 2015 Helsinki Declaration, containing the Assembly’s wide-ranging policy recommendations for the OSCE and its participating States in the fields of political-security affairs, economics, the environment and human rights.

The Session also featured a special commemoration of the Helsinki Final Act’s 40th anniversary and a presentation of the results of the PA’s Helsinki +40 Project on organizational reform, as well as several side events focused on conflict resolution, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and gender equality.

Keynote speakers included Finnish President Sauli Niinisto, Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and others.

Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) was re-elected Assembly President at the close of the Session on 9 July. Doris Barnett (Germany) was newly elected Treasurer, George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Robert Aderholt (United States) were re-

-elected Vice-Presidents. Peter Bowness (United Kingdom) and Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) were newly elected Vice-Presidents.

The Assembly’s three General Committees also held elections, with the Committee on Political Affairs and Security re-electing Roger Wicker (United States), Azay Guliyev and Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) as Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur, respectively. In the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, Roza Aknazarova (Kyrgyzstan) was re-elected Chair, Nilza Sena (Portugal) was re-elected Vice-Chair, and Marietta Tidei (Italy) was re-elected Rapporteur. In the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Isabel Santos (Portugal) and Gordana Comic (Serbia) were re-elected Chair and Rapporteur, respectively, while Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic) was newly elected Vice-Chair.

At the Standing Committee meeting on 5 July, Roberto Montella of Italy was confirmed by a vote of 46-3 as the next Secretary General of the OSCE PA with a five-year term starting on 1 January 2016.

In his final address to an Annual Session as OSCE PA Secretary General, Spencer Oliver thanked the parliamentarians for their support for more than two decades. Oliver said that there is no group of people more dedicated to meeting the challenges of the OSCE area than parliamentarians directly elected by the citizens of their countries.

Helsinki Declaration



On 9 July, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly adopted the 2015 Helsinki Declaration, containing policy recommendations and pronouncements for the OSCE and its 57 participating States in the fields of political affairs and security, economics, the environment, humanitarian questions and human rights.

The crisis in and around Ukraine, the plight of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean region, arms control, climate change, water management, terrorism, anti-LGBT legislation, and threats to civil society are among the topics addressed in the Declaration.

The Assembly also approved 13 supplementary items to accompany the Declaration, including a condemnation of Russia's violations of core OSCE principles in Ukraine; a call for comprehensive legislative reform to address the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters; an appeal for enhanced co-operation on economic and environmental issues in the Arctic; and an affirmation of the need to safeguard the rights and human dignity of migrants and refugees.

A resolution adopted by the Assembly on the occasion of the Helsinki Final Act's anniversary, entitled "Helsinki +40: Building the OSCE of the Future," contains concrete recommendations for reforming the OSCE to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. The resolution is one of the products of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project, which concluded in Helsinki with the presentation of its Final Report.

Following its adoption by the Assembly, the Helsinki Declaration was sent to the foreign ministers of OSCE participating States and to speakers of parliament to be presented in national parliaments.

At the close of each Annual Session, the Assembly adopts a Declaration with recommendations in the fields of political affairs, security, economics, environment and human rights. Representing the collective voice of the OSCE parliamentarians, the Declaration helps shape OSCE and national policy. It is complemented by a number of supplementary items relating to OSCE commitments and values.



The full text of the Helsinki Declaration and supplementary items is available in English, French and Russian at www.oscepa.org.



Inaugural Plenary Session



The 24th Annual Session's opening plenary on 6 July.

Finnish President Sauli Niinisto, Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva and OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver addressed the opening plenary of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki on 6 July. President Kanerva welcomed parliamentarians to the second OSCE PA Annual Session that his country has hosted.

Sauli Niinisto, President of the Republic of Finland



Sauli Niinisto

President Niinisto opened the Session noting that tensions have risen to an unwelcome level in the OSCE area and stressing the importance of maintaining lines of communication and dialogue between East and West.

“We can't afford to spend next decade or even more wrapped in a cold battle,” he said. “Neither Europe nor Russia – not to even mention the people of Ukraine – will gain from this situation and these troubled relations. We need to stop the situation from worsening. The most urgent task is to end violence in Ukraine.”

The President recalled that in the Helsinki Accords, both Moscow and Western capitals agreed to refrain from the use of force, respect the sovereignty of countries and the inviolability of borders. “These points are as valid as they were 40 years ago. Or they are even more valid now, when these principles have been violated,” he said.

Timo Soini, Foreign Minister of Finland

Referring to the decision by the Finnish Government to enforce European Union visa bans against several Members of the OSCE PA's Russian Delegation who had registered to attend the Session – prompting a Russian boycott – the Finnish Foreign Minister acknowledged the effect that the decision had on the PA.

“It is unfortunate that not all Delegations are here today,” he said. “As there are EU sanctions in place, we have followed the rules we have agreed to... Let me tell you, if you are frustrated, so am I.”

Soini proceeded by emphasizing the importance of fostering the political will needed to fully implement the Minsk Agreements aimed at resolving the Ukraine conflict.

He also highlighted the importance of arms control, the implementation of human dimension commitments, co-operation on environmental issues, mediation capacity and gender equality as areas that he the OSCE must prioritize to realize its full potential.

Ilkka Kanerva, President of the OSCE PA

President Kanerva recalled the “hard negotiations, hard concessions, and more than a little bravery” that culminated in the signing of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act four decades



Timo Soini

Inaugural Plenary Session

ago, but expressed concerns about recent developments.

“I am afraid that recently in the OSCE area, far too many fundamental promises have been broken. The crisis in and around Ukraine has shocked us all,” Kanerva said.

Stressing the importance of constructive dialogue and co-operation with all participating States, he added that the Organization cannot close its eyes to how far crisis in and around Ukraine has taken the OSCE from the spirit of Helsinki.

President Kanerva expressed his intention to approach the European Union to discuss how the sanctions regime is affecting the work of the OSCE PA and other assemblies.

Concluding, he described the PA’s initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the Organization as “a good start towards a new generation for the OSCE – the OSCE 2.0.”



Ilkka Kanerva

Spencer Oliver, Secretary General of the OSCE PA

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver recalled his more than 40 years of involvement in the Helsinki Process, including in the preparations for negotiating the Helsinki Final Act as early as 1972. Oliver emphasized the central importance of human rights in the Final Act and the enduring relevance they maintain today.

He further addressed the Assembly’s finances and the importance of OSCE election observation, which benefits greatly from the visibility and credibility that the parliamentarians provide, he said. In conclusion, Oliver recalled the need for reform within the OSCE in order for it to be more transparent and effective in its work.



Spencer Oliver

Helsinki +40 Commemorative Event



The Final Report of the OSCE PA’s Helsinki +40 Project was presented in the second half of the plenary on 6 July.

In the second half of the plenary, the Commemorative Event of the Helsinki +40 Project included presentations by Spencer Oliver, Ilkka Kanerva and experts from several think tanks, who discussed the conclusions in the Project’s Final Report. The report contains wide-ranging ideas for reforming the OSCE on the occasion of the Helsinki Final Act’s anniversary to ensure its

relevance and efficiency in the years ahead. A resolution based on the report, sponsored by Project Chair Joao Soares (MP, Portugal), was unanimously agreed to in the plenary session.

“We pay tribute to the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE for advancing human security over the last four decades,” said President Kanerva in presenting the report. “But make no mistake: This is by no means the time to sit back and be satisfied. Today, the only fitting way to commemorate the Final Act is to strive with new urgency toward realizing its vision of respectful interstate relations and adherence to commitments – and that requires reforming the way we work.”

Participants in the Commemorative Event included Ivan Timofeev, Director of Programmes at the Russian International Affairs Council; Ivan Vejvoda, Senior Vice-President of Programmes for the German Marshall Fund of the United States; Mats Karlsson, Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs; and Teija Tiilikainen, Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. The experts offered their insights on the Project and its results, pointing in particular to the importance of guaranteeing youth participation in OSCE affairs, maintaining the network between the think tanks and the Organization as a way to strengthen dialogue, and the enduring validity of the Helsinki Principles.

Helsinki +40 Concluding Seminar



The Helsinki seminar was the last of a series of seminars held in Moscow, Washington, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Belgrade as part of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project.

Participants at a seminar organized by the OSCE PA and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs discussed the conclusions of the OSCE PA's Final Report of the Helsinki +40 Project, "Building the OSCE of the Future." Opened on 5 July by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva, Co-Chair of the Helsinki +40 Project, the seminar included remarks by OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, Special Co-ordinator of the Helsinki Project, and Finnish Ambassador Jaakko Itoniemi, who has been involved in the Helsinki process since the 1970s.

In his opening remarks, Kanerva discussed the findings of the Project, which consisted of five seminars held from Sept. 2014 to May 2015. "Our Helsinki +40 seminars have demonstrated general agreement among participants that the OSCE must continue to be a bridge between East and West, but that in doing so, it must also renew its focus on adherence to its core principles and commitments – particularly in the areas of territorial integrity and human rights," he said.

Oliver presented an overview of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project Final Report and discussed the Project's origins. He described the seminars as a "useful meeting of the minds" between experts, diplomats and parliamentarians who have a deep understanding of issues facing the OSCE.

In his presentation, Ambassador Itoniemi dis-

cussed the innovative approaches that emerged from the preparatory meetings leading up to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. He noted that the Helsinki Final Act is not just an agreement on human rights – it is a strategy of how to apply in practice the commitments undertaken in 1975.

Also speaking at the seminar were Teija Tiilikainen, Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs; Ambassador Katja Pehrman, Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE; Andrei Zagorski, Head of Department for Arms Control and Conflict Resolution, Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Nina Suomalainen, former Deputy Head of Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ivan Vejvoda, Senior Vice President, German Marshall Fund of the United States; and Petri Hakkarainen, Acting Director for Policy Planning and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The speakers provided feedback on the conclusions of the Project's Final Report, largely agreeing with the PA's recommendation that the OSCE's field activities should be strengthened and that the Organization should place greater emphasis on conflict prevention. There was also general agreement that there is no need for a new Decalogue of Principles, but rather better implementation of the ten principles already agreed to.

"It is in the spirit of keeping the promises of 1975 that we meet here today, and it is this spirit that has guided our series of seminars known as the Helsinki +40 Project."

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva



Standing Committee



Standing Committee delegates vote for the OSCE PA's next Secretary General.

The Standing Committee consists of the 57 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, the Autumn Meeting and the Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget, and elects the OSCE PA Secretary General.

Chaired by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva, the Standing Committee on 5 July voted by 46-3 to confirm Roberto Montella as the OSCE PA's next Secretary General, with a five-year term beginning on 1 January 2016. The meeting also featured OSCE PA Treasurer Roberto Battelli's report on the Assembly's finances and Secretary General Spencer Oliver's report.

Delegates also approved 13 supplementary items for debate during the Annual Session. Four supplementary items were allocated to the First Committee, three to the Second Committee, and four to the Third Committee. Two items, "Helsinki +40: Building the OSCE of the Future" and "The Continuation of Clear, Gross and Uncorrected Violations of OSCE Commitments and International Norms by the Russian Federation," were sent to plenary session for debate, while two – on the inadmissibility of sanctions on members of parliament and neo-Nazism in Europe – were invalidated due to the non-participation of the Russian Delegation in the Session.

In his welcome address, President Kanerva acknowledged that "this Annual Session is not business as usual" in reference to the situation with the Russian boycott following the decision of the Finnish Government not to grant visas to six members of the OSCE PA Russian Delegation who were on the European Union's travel ban. More than 20 parliamentarians took the floor to debate the situation, and in a full and frank exchange of views, parliamentarians expressed opinions both for and against the Finnish Government's decision. Several stated that it is important to continue open dialogue on resolving the crisis in and around Ukraine,

among other issues, while others pointed out that only certain individuals were on the EU's blacklist and that the Russian Federation could have sent alternative delegates.

Following this discussion, Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) presented his report on the finances of the Assembly, noting that it remains in good fiscal health and that the PA is the only OSCE Institution to use independent auditors. After a brief discussion of the OSCE PA's audit procedure, the Assembly's budget for fiscal year 2015/2016 was unanimously adopted.

In Spencer Oliver's final report to an Annual Session Standing Committee as Secretary General, he expressed gratitude for the work of parliamentarians that have made the PA so effective in its activities, including election observation. He spoke about how the Parliamentary Assembly had grown from humble beginnings and now lends greater legitimacy to the OSCE as a whole. He also reported on the conclusions of the Helsinki +40 Project, which he described as a successful and useful endeavour.

Following the voting for Oliver's successor, Montella gave an acceptance speech noting his years of experience as a conflict mediator, skills he intends to bring to his new position. "It is very important to reach out to all our partners in the OSCE and try to also de-emotionalize the atmosphere around the OSCE region and defuse tension," he said. "This is I hope what I can contribute."

It was also announced during the Standing Committee that Mongolia would host the 2015 Autumn Meeting in Ulaanbaatar and that the 2016 Annual Session would take place in Tbilisi, Georgia.

"It's been 22 years of great success, great pleasure and at many times great challenges, and I want to thank all of you for support and all the things you've done for me during the past 22 years."

PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver







General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



The First Committee held a total of four sessions, beginning its work on 6 July with Chair Roger Wicker (United States), Vice-Chair Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) and Rapporteur Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) serving as officers. In addition to Cederfelt's resolution, the Committee debated, amended and approved four supplementary items, including resolutions on adherence to the Helsinki principles in interstate relations, foreign terrorist fighters, and the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

Cederfelt presented her report and draft

resolution on the opening day, underlining the current serious challenges to the European security architecture 40 years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

In the debate, parliamentarians discussed issues covered in the report, with particular focus on the crisis in and around Ukraine, commending the work done by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) despite challenges. OSCE PA Members also noted the growing concerns raised by violent extremism and the atmosphere of distrust and lack of dialogue among participating States.

Side events on conflict resolution, nuclear disarmament



Organized by the Finnish Parliament and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in co-operation with the OSCE PA, a side event on 6 July focused on how to strengthen parliamentary involvement in conflict mediation efforts. It was addressed, inter alia, by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva and Minister for Foreign Affairs Timo Soini, and explored topics such as inclusive mediation and national dialogue facilitation.

At a roundtable event on 7 July co-hosted by the Austrian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, participants discussed the current state of the nuclear threat in Europe and the Middle East, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, and the ongoing negotiations with Iran over its nuclear programme. OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen (Austria) opened the discussion with some background on PNND, of which she serves as Co-President, and talked about what the OSCE PA can do to advance nuclear disarmament.

She noted that the First Committee had agreed to several amendments she introduced on nuclear risk reduction, stressing that the existence of nuclear weapons and their deployment by some participating States undermines the spirit of the OSCE.

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

Report and Resolution

In her address, Rapporteur Margareta Cederfelt focused on the ongoing threats to core Helsinki principles that are contributing to mutual mistrust in the OSCE area, while noting the relevance and added value of the Parliamentary Assembly as the democratic backbone of the Organization and an inclusive forum for dialogue.

“As a crucial player, the OSCE PA must continue to promote values and achieve goals set forth 40 years ago here in Helsinki, by enhancing dialogue and systematic co-operation among participating States,” said Cederfelt in presenting her report and draft resolution.

The resolution urges all parties to fully implement the Minsk Agreements and to allow SMM monitors unfettered access to all parts of the territory of Ukraine with safety guarantees, calls on the OSCE to further update and modernize the Vienna Document, and urges the OSCE to upgrade its Mediterranean dimension.

The debate touched on matters related to combating terrorism, arms control and nuclear disarmament. Parliamentarians stressed that dialogue and co-operation among participating States are necessary in times of crisis in order to effectively counter transnational threats, as well as to ensure full compliance with already existing key documents and agreements for peace and security in the OSCE region.

There were 69 proposed amendments to the resolution, with 36 adopted.

Supplementary Items

The First Committee discussed four supplementary items. The resolution “Adherence to the Helsinki Principles in Inter-State Relations Across the OSCE Area,” principally sponsored by First Committee Vice-Chair Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan), was approved by a large margin with two amendments.

The Committee passed the resolution “OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects



of Security: Awareness-Raising, Dissemination, Better Implementation and Outreach,” principally sponsored by Ida Glanzmann (Switzerland), by an overwhelming majority. The resolution calls for greater democratic oversight of the armed forces and full compliance with the Code, highlighting the negative impact of ongoing conflicts especially in eastern Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

The resolution “The Co-operative Phase in Post-Conflict Borders: New Tools and New Actors for a Broader View of the Conflict Cycle,” authored by Ignacio Sanchez-Amor (Spain), was approved unanimously with one amendment.

The resolution “A Comprehensive Legislative Reform on Foreign Terrorist Fighters from the OSCE Area,” principally sponsored by Cristina de Pietro (Italy), was adopted with overwhelming support and 13 amendments agreed upon. In the debate, Members discussed measures to combat terrorism and its funding, including through improving dialogue among participating States. They also expressed concern over the increasing number of terrorist attacks around the OSCE area, and how violent extremism is requiring States to adapt to fast-evolving transnational threats.

The Committee wrapped up its work on 8 July with the election of committee officers.

Election of Officers

Chair: Roger Wicker (United States)

Vice-Chair: Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan)

Rapporteur: Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden)

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment



Roza Aknazarova chairs the meeting of the Second Committee on 7 July.

The three sessions of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment on 7-8 July were presided over by Chair Roza Aknazarova, Head of Kyrgyzstan's OSCE PA Delegation. Members considered the main draft resolution proposed by the Rapporteur and three supplementary items which dealt with environmental challenges and economic opportunities in the Arctic region, human trafficking, and the modernization of the system of national contributions to the budget of the OSCE.

Report and Resolution

The Rapporteur of the Committee, Marietta Tidei (Italy), presented her report and draft resolution, exploring the evolution of the OSCE since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 and the main implications for the development of economic co-operation, science, technology and environmental protection in the OSCE area.

The Rapporteur gave particular attention to food and water security, energy security, environmental challenges, and economic co-operation. Tidei discussed the importance of developing a green economy and the imperative of implementing a comprehensive approach to combat climate change, underscoring that “the significance of co-operation in the economic, environmental and cultural realms must be updated to take into account the present-day agenda.” She noted that “excessive rigidity and austerity are not demonstrating themselves to be appropriate for the economic challenges of

our millennium.”

In addition to the Helsinki Final Act, the Rapporteur referenced a number of other international agreements and documents, including the Energy Union Package, the EU's Energy Strategy, the EU Climate and Energy Policy Framework, the Fifth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, and the Milan Protocol – an international agreement that addresses the problem of sustainability in the food chain. Tidei called upon parliamentarians to recall “the reasons that led 35 nations to declare a reciprocal commitment to security and co-operation” in 1975 and urged the OSCE to act as a “facilitator and promoter of initiatives,” as well as to “strengthen measures against international corruption and money laundering.”

Tidei concluded by urging greater co-operation between Southern European States and partners in Northern Africa aimed at the identification of shared strategies to manage migratory flows and prevent humanitarian tragedies involving refugees and migrants, as well as seizing the economic opportunities related to the rapid economic development of China and its substantial investments around the globe, particularly in the OSCE area.

Eighteen parliamentarians took the floor, commending the work of the Rapporteur and presenting their views on a range of issues related to the report. These included tax evasion and regulation of the financial sector, water and energy security, gender inequality, strengthening the OSCE's economic-environmental dimension and the potential of economic co-operation to reinforce peace and security. Fol-

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment



Members applaud the results of the Second Committee's election, in which all three officers won a new term.

Following the addresses by parliamentarians, the Committee considered 22 amendments to the draft resolution, with 17 adopted. Following the consideration of amendments, the document was adopted unanimously.

Supplementary Items

Sponsored by Torstein Tvedt Solberg and presented by Kari Henriksen, both members of the Norwegian Delegation, the supplementary item “Environmental Challenges and Economic Opportunities in the High North” underlined the importance of Arctic co-operation and emphasized the role of parliamentarians in the OSCE area to advise and contribute to the work on environmental challenges and economic opportunities in the High North.

The item also encourages the Arctic States to take nature conservation measures to protect endangered flora and fauna in the Arctic region and to develop research on the impact of global warming on the region’s biodiversity. During the debate, the 2015 Paris UN Climate Change Conference was highlighted as an opportunity to address the issues raised by the resolution. The item was adopted unanimously.

The supplementary item “Modernization of the System of National Contributions to the OSCE Budget,” principally sponsored by then-Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), notes that the scales of contributions to the OSCE had not been updated since 2005 and that the budget was insufficient to ensure that the Assembly could continue its level of activities. It urges participating States and the OSCE Permanent

Council to finalize a substantial modernization of the Scales of Contributions by the end of the year 2015. With one amendment agreed to, the item was adopted with overwhelming support.

The resolution “Responsibility to Combat Human Trafficking in Government Contracts for Goods and Services,” principally sponsored by Christopher Smith (United States), was presented by Arthur Spring (Ireland). Recalling earlier OSCE PA resolutions on the topic and agreed-upon OSCE commitments related to combating trafficking, the item calls on the OSCE to review existing requirements and facilitate the prevention of human trafficking at all levels. Specifically, it calls for developing a handbook on best practices for companies to prevent human trafficking in their supply chains, and urges participating States to encourage all businesses to adopt policies and procedures to prevent labour trafficking in their supply chains. The resolution was adopted with overwhelming support.

Following the adoption of the main resolution and supplementary items, elections for the positions of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur took place during the third session on 8 July, with the previous leadership re-elected by acclamation.

Election of Officers

Chair: Roza Aknazarova (Kyrgyzstan)

Vice-Chair: Nilza Sena (Portugal)

Rapporteur: Marietta Tidei (Italy)

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Chair Isabel Santos (Portugal) presided over three meetings of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions on 6-8 July. In addition to the main resolution proposed by the Rapporteur, four supplementary items were adopted by the committee.

Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Gordana Comic (Serbia) presented her report, which examined how the OSCE has evolved since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 and the implications this document has had for human rights in the region. The report offers recommendations on how the Organization can rejuvenate

its commitments to human rights, warning that the spirit of Helsinki is lacking in the human dimension. In her address, Comic called for a renewal of efforts by the OSCE to protect fundamental freedoms, stressing how essential standing up for human rights is for the Organization's credibility. She lamented that a willingness to bargain with basic rights is squandering an opportunity to strengthen the human dimension.

Seventeen parliamentarians took the floor to debate the report and draft resolution, expressing views on issues including increased pressures in the region on civil society, the media and freedom of assembly, as well as concerns on migration, Ukraine, religious identity and gender issues.

Parliamentarians consider gender issues at working lunch



Opened by Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) and Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada), the Gender Lunch on 8 July featured a keynote address by former Defence Minister of Finland and Undersecretary General of the United Nations Elisabeth Rehn.

The discussion focused on gender equality and the impact of armed conflict on women. Speakers stressed the importance of fully implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which provides a blueprint for women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacekeeping work. Following the keynote addresses, participants discussed how to promote gender equality in the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly, focusing in particular on what is lacking in international efforts to empower women and girls. Parliamentarians noted that education and political commitment are essential elements to the successful implementation of gender equality goals.

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Distributing ballots for the Third Committee Vice-Chair election.

Following the discussion, the Committee debated the proposed amendments to Comic's resolution. Fifty-two amendments to the draft resolution had been proposed but 12 were subsequently invalidated. Of the remaining resolutions amendments, 26 were adopted and 12 rejected. The resolution was adopted as amended with overwhelming support.

Supplementary Items

The supplementary item "Calling for Urgent Solutions to the Tragedy of Deaths in the Mediterranean," authored by Marietta Tidei (Italy), reaffirms the full right of all people fleeing from persecution and armed conflict to seek asylum in OSCE participating States and calls for a strengthened inter-parliamentary Mediterranean dimension in the OSCE. Further urging greater action to be taken against traffickers who use unseaworthy vessels, the resolution passed with eight amendments. The debate included an exchange of views on distinctions between asylum seekers and economic migrants.

The item "Missing Persons in Connection with Armed Conflicts," principally sponsored by Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), passed unamended. The resolution expresses deep concern over the numbers of missing persons worldwide and calls on OSCE participating States to strictly observe their commitments under international law with regard to missing persons in connection with armed conflicts.

The supplementary item "Abducted and Illegally Detained Ukrainian Citizens in the Russian Federation," authored by Ostap Semerak (Ukraine), was adopted by a large margin. The

resolution, inter alia, strongly condemns the abductions of Ukrainian citizens, including Member of Parliament Nadiya Savchenko and filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, and their continued detention in the Russian Federation.

The final supplementary item "Women and Girls made Vulnerable by Armed Conflict, Crisis or Minority Status," authored by Hedy Fry (Canada), was adopted unanimously with three amendments to the text.

The resolution calls on participating States to ensure that the specific needs of women and girls are incorporated into all aspects of humanitarian assistance programming, and that addressing violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, is prioritized. It further urges enhancing educational and vocational training and economic opportunities for women and girls, especially those affected by armed conflict or crisis and those from minority groups.

Following the adoption of the supplementary items, elections for the positions of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur took place. For the positions of Chair and Rapporteur, respectively, incumbents Isabel Santos (Portugal) and Gordana Comic (Serbia) were re-elected by acclamation. Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic) was newly elected Vice-Chair for a one-year term.



Committee Chair Isabel Santos (right) congratulates Ivana Dobesova following her election as Committee Vice-Chair.

Election of Officers

Chair: Isabel Santos (Portugal)

Vice-Chair: Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic)

Rapporteur: Gordana Comic (Serbia)

Second Plenary Session



The Assembly meeting in plenary session on 8 July.

President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) and Vice-Presidents Kent Harstedt (Sweden) and George Tsereteli (Georgia) chaired two plenaries on 8-9 July, in which the Helsinki Declaration was adopted and election results announced. Hedy Fry (Canada) and Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) presented reports on gender issues and the OSCE PA's finances, respectively, and Members also heard addresses by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Ivica Dacic, and PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver.

Hedy Fry, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues

Hedy Fry's report "Gender and the Future Development of the OSCE" explored gender balance in the OSCE on the eve of its 40th anniversary, stressing that participating States have only partially achieved the goals set for gender equality.

In her presentation, Fry identified several areas that require urgent action, namely the protection of women and girls in armed conflict, the empowerment of women by ensuring their access to training, education and employment, and the need to guarantee the equality of men and women under the law and equal access to health services.

Fry noted that regarding the OSCE PA's commitment to gender balance, more political will is needed to move the issue forward. "It is like running on one leg," she said, when only one gender is fully empowered.

Continuation of Debate on the Russian Federation's Violations of Helsinki Principles in Ukraine

Nearly 50 parliamentarians took the floor on 8 July to debate the supplementary item "Continuation of Clear, Gross and Uncorrected Violations of OSCE Commitments and International Norms by the Russian Federation," authored by Dean Allison (Canada).

Members stressed the need to support Ukraine both economically and politically, and called for Russia to end its interference in the country. Halting the deployment of heavy weapons and fully implementing the Minsk Agreements were also emphasized.

A number of parliamentarians objected to the absence of the Russian Delegation from the debate and consequently abstained from the vote. The resolution, which condemns the Russian Federation's failure to respect the Helsinki Accords' principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and urges economic, constitutional and governance reforms in Ukraine, was adopted by a vote of 96-7, with 32 abstentions. Six amendments were agreed to.

Election Observation Reports and General Debate

The plenary session on 8 July heard reports from leaders of recent election observation missions to the United Kingdom, Tajikistan and Turkey, before the floor was opened up for general debate – with Members touching on a range of topics including climate change and the need for improving dialogue in the PA.

Closing Plenary Session

Roberto Battelli, OSCE PA Treasurer

Roberto Battelli presented his final report as OSCE PA Treasurer on 9 July, noting that the Assembly remains in good financial health and that its spending has remained within budget. He pointed out that the Assembly's finances had once again received a positive assessment from external auditors and indicated that the Standing Committee had approved the annual budget for the next fiscal year.

Adoption of Helsinki Declaration

Following the Treasurer's Report, the OSCE PA's Helsinki Declaration was adopted by majority vote.

Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General

Noting the significance of being in the same hall where the Helsinki Final Act was signed 40 years ago, Secretary General Zannier recalled that the historic document not only established the OSCE but also created a system of relations based on a number of essential principles. These commitments must continue to guide the Organization, he said, which requires an improved system for enforcing rules.

Ukraine is very much at the center of what the OSCE is doing at the moment, he said, with the Organization playing a key role in the political process through the Trilateral Contact Group and one of the largest OSCE operations ever deployed on the ground. In this way, the OSCE is serving as the eyes and ears of the international community, he noted, pointing out that the entire toolbox of the OSCE has been used in responding to the crisis.

Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Serbian Foreign Minister

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office focused in particular on the crisis in and around Ukraine. He noted that recalling the spirit of Helsinki,

as called for in the Session's theme, is the first step of a difficult discussion that must be engaged in order to overcome the current crisis. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is an "invaluable platform for promoting inclusive dialogue and joint action among OSCE participating States," he said.

The Helsinki Final Act has helped shape European security for the past four decades, he stressed, recalling that the continent has not always been conflict-free during this period. Nevertheless, the Accords have contributed significantly to reducing tensions between East and West.

Spencer Oliver, OSCE PA Secretary General

In his final address at an Annual Session as Secretary General of the OSCE PA, Spencer Oliver noted how fitting it was to finish his journey at Finlandia Hall, 43 years after becoming involved in the process shaping the Helsinki Final Act. He highlighted the great privilege it has been to be first Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and to be able to serve the parliamentarians who make the PA's work possible.

Announcement of Election Results

Election results were announced for Assembly Officers, with President Ilkka Kanerva re-elected, Doris Barnett (Germany) newly elected Treasurer, George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Robert Aderholt (United States) re-elected Vice-Presidents, and Peter Bowness (United Kingdom) and Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) newly elected Vice-Presidents.



Spencer Oliver presented with a gift by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva.





Officers of the Assembly

The Officers of the Assembly, also known as the Bureau, include the President, Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, General Committee Officers and the President Emeritus. The Bureau is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Standing Committee are carried out, as well as for the efficient operation of the Assembly between meetings of the Standing Committee. The Bureau takes decisions by a two-thirds majority vote.



OSCE PA Bureau meeting on 8 July 2015.

Ilkka Kanerva (Finland)

was elected President of the Assembly at the 2014 Annual Session and re-elected in 2015. A former OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kanerva has been a member of the Finnish Parliament since 1975. He has held a variety of posts in his government and national legislature, including service as a Minister in the Ministry of Finance (1987-1995), Minister of Transport (1990-1991), Deputy Prime Minister (1991), Minister for Foreign Affairs (2007-2008), Deputy Speaker of Parliament (2003-2007), Chair of the Parliamentary Defence Committee (1999-2003) and Chair of the Parliamentary Security and Defence Reflecting group (2012-2013). Elected Vice-President of the Assembly to fill a vacancy in 2013, he has also served as a member of the OSCE PA's Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and was Co-Chair of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project.



since 1994. She currently serves on the Committee on Economics and Technology and the Committee on European Union Affairs. She is the Head of the German Delegation to the OSCE PA and is also a member of the Council of Europe and the European Security and Defence Assembly.

Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene (Lithuania)

was elected Vice-President at the 2013 OSCE PA Annual Session in Istanbul after serving two terms as Rapporteur of the Committee on Political Affairs and Security. She also served as Head of Delegation of Lithuania to the OSCE PA from 2008 to 2012 and is a member the Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus. Aleknaite Abramikiene has been a member of the *Seimas* (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania since 1992 and is a member of the Committees on European Affairs and Legal Affairs. She holds a degree in music from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and a law degree from the Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius. Her term as OSCE PA Vice-President runs until 2016.



Doris Barnett (Germany)

was elected Treasurer in 2015, after serving since 2013 as Vice-President. She has been a member of the German Bundestag



Isabel Pozuelo (Spain)

was elected Vice-President at the 2009 Annual Session in Vilnius and re-elected to full terms

Officers of the Assembly



at the 2010 and 2013 Annual Sessions. She has been a member of the Spanish Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2004. Pozuelo has served in the Spanish Congress of Deputies since 1996, and is currently a member of the Defence Com-

mittee. She previously served on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Finance Committee and the Health Care and Consumer Affairs Committee. She has also served as member of the PERSAM Foundation for the integration of migrants in the workforce. Her term as OSCE PA Vice-President expires in 2016.

Alain Neri (France)

was re-elected Vice-President during the 2013 Annual Session in Istanbul. He previously served one year as Vice-President and one term as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. He has



been a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly since 2002 and has served as Deputy Head of the French Delegation since 2007. From 2007 to 2008, and since 2009, he has been the secretary of the bureau of the French National Assembly, where he has served since 1988. He also served as Vice-President of the French National Assembly from 2008 to 2009. Neri has been a member and Vice-President of the Social Affairs Committee for various years between 1988 and 2008 and is now member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He has served as Mayor of Beauregard-l'Eveque since 1983. His vice-presidential term expires in 2016.

Robert Aderholt (United States)

was elected OSCE PA Vice-President at the Monaco Annual Session in 2012. In the

U.S. Congress, he is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, which has jurisdiction over funding the operation of the federal government. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Agriculture and a member



of the Commerce, Justice and Science as well as the Defense Subcommittees, he supports greater transparency, accountability and oversight of the appropriations process. Aderholt is also an active member of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (also known as the Helsinki Commission).

Kent Harstedt (Sweden)



was elected Vice-President of the Assembly at the 2014 Annual Session in Baku. A member of the Swedish Parliament since 1998, he has served on the Committee on Defence, the Committee on Health and Welfare, the Joint

Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. Prior to joining Parliament, Harstedt worked as a freelance journalist and served as chair of UNICEF Sweden from 1999 to 2005. In the OSCE PA, Harstedt is a member of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security and has been particularly active in election observation activities, having participated in missions to Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, the United States and Ukraine. He is also active in the Swedish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Christine Muttonen (Austria)

was elected Vice-President at the 2014 Annual Session in Baku. In addition to serving as Deputy Head of the Austrian Delegation to the

Officers of the Assembly



PA, she is also active in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. She has participated in several OSCE PA election observation missions, including as Special Co-ordinator of the short-term observer mission

to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in April 2014. Muttonen has been a Member of the Austrian Parliament since 1999 and serves as area spokesperson for the Austrian Social Democratic Parliamentary Group for Foreign and European Politics. She also serves as Co-President of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

George Tsereteli (Georgia)

George Tsereteli (Georgia) was elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the 2012 Annual Session in Monaco and re-elected at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki. Following a career in business and as a practicing neurologist,



Tsereteli came to politics in 1995, serving in the Tbilisi municipality and as Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. He has been a Member of Parliament since 1999, and has served as Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Vice Prime Minister, Chairman of the Committee on Regional Policy, Chairman of the Committee on Healthcare and Social Issues and as Acting Chairman of Parliament. From 2010 to the present, Tsereteli has served as President of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), having previously served as Vice-President of the EPF.

Roberto Battelli (Slovenia)

was elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki after serving for three terms as the

Assembly's Treasurer. He is also currently the OSCE PA's Special Representative on South East Europe, a position he has held since 2006. Since becoming a member of the OSCE PA in 1992, Battelli has been particularly active in

election observation. He has observed more than 20 elections across the OSCE area and has served as Head of the OSCE PA Delegation and as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term election observers in Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Battelli has been a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia since 1990, where he is a member of the parliamentary expert group that was responsible for drafting the country's constitution.



Peter Bowness (United Kingdom)



was elected Vice-President of the OSCE PA at the Helsinki Annual Session in 2015. As a member of the House of Lords, he serves on the European Union Energy and Environment Sub-Committee and has been a member of the European Union

Select Committee, among other assignments. He was the former Chairman of the House of Lords EU Sub-Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy and the former Chairman of the EU Sub-Committee on Justice and Institutions. Lord Bowness has also served on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights and was one of the UK Parliamentary Representatives for the Convention responsible for drafting the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. He has been a member of the British Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2007 and serves as Chair of the OSCE PA's Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure.

General Committee Officers



General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

One of the most important aspects of the work of the Annual Session is the deliberation that takes place in the three General Committees.

Following the 1991 Madrid Declaration, three committees were established along the lines of the three main “baskets” or sections of the Helsinki Final Act: The First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security; the Second General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment; and the Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Following debate and discussion, a draft resolution is adopted by each Committee for presentation to the Annual Plenary Session of the Assembly, which is then included in the Final Declaration.

First General Committee

Roger Wicker (United States)



has served as the Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Committee on Political Affairs and Security since November 2014 and was re-elected at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki. Wicker joined

the U.S. Congress in 1995 to represent Mississippi’s First Congressional District in the House of Representatives. He was appointed to the Senate in 2007, winning a special election the following year

and re-election in 2012. He currently serves as the Co-Chair of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission). Within the U.S. Senate he is a member of the Armed Services Committee; the Budget Committee; the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; the Environment and Public Works Committee; and the Rules Committee.

Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan)



was elected Vice-Chair of the First Committee at the Istanbul Annual Session in 2013 and was re-elected twice. Guliyev, a Member of Parliament since 2005, currently serves on the Permanent Committee on State Building and Legislative Policy, authored his

country’s law on civic participation and heads the Azerbaijan-Romania Inter-parliamentary Working Group. He has been a member of Azerbaijan’s OSCE PA Delegation since 2005.

Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden)

has served as the Rapporteur for the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security since 2015. First entering the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) in 1999, Cederfelt served as an Alternate Member of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA from 2010 to 2014 and since 2014



General Committee Officers



General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

as Deputy Head of the Delegation. Cederfelt has also taken part in numerous election observation missions with the OSCE PA, and was head of the OSCE PA observation mission to Tajikistan for the 2013 presidential election. In her national parliament, Cederfelt has served as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs since 2014. She has also served as Chair of the National Board of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) and Treasurer of the PGA Executive Board since 2011.

Second General Committee

Roza Aknazarova (Kyrgyzstan)

was elected Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment at the 2013 Annual Session in Istanbul and has been re-elected twice. Aknazarova first served in the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan in 2000-2001



and returned in November 2010. She serves in her parliament's Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Information and Religious Policies as well as the Parliamentary Democracy Committee. From 2001 to 2005 she served as Minister of Labour and Social Protection in the Government of the the Kyrgyz Republic. She holds a PhD in economics from the Moscow Academic-Research Institute of Agricultural Economics and has been a central figure within Kyrgyzstan in reforming the country's banking sector.

Nilza Sena (Portugal)



was elected Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment at the 2013 Istanbul Annual Session and has been re-elected twice. A Member of the Portuguese Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly since

2011, Sena is also a founder and member of the Board of the Portuguese Platform for Sustainable Development and Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture. She is Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party and a Professor at the Technical University of Lisbon. She holds a Master's degree in Political Science and a PhD in Social Sciences in the specialty of sociology and has published numerous academic articles.

Marietta Tidei (Italy)



was elected Rapporteur of the Second Committee at the 2014 Annual Session in Baku. Elected to her national parliament in 2013, Tidei is active in the Parliamentary Committee for the Procedures of Charge and the

Committee on Economic Activities, Trade and Tourism. She is from Rome and is a member of the Democratic Party.

General Committee Officers



General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Third General Committee

Isabel Santos (Portugal)

was elected Chair of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions at the 2013 Annual Session in Istanbul and has been re-elected twice. Santos has been a Member of Portuguese Parliament from 2005 to 2009 and resumed her service in the Parliament in 2011. She serves on the Committee on Budget, Finance and Public Administration and the Committee on Agriculture and the Sea. She has participated in several OSCE PA election observation missions, leading OSCE PA delegations to observe elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United States.



Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic)

was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki. Dobesova serves as the Head of the Delegation of the Czech Republic to the OSCE PA and has been a member of her national parliament since 2013. Within the Czech Chamber of Deputies she is



Vice-Chair of the Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and a member of the Committee on Petitions and the Sub-Committee on Migration. Dobesova also serves as a substitute member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. She has been an active participant in OSCE PA election observation activities since joining the Assembly, participating in missions to Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

Gordana Comic (Serbia)



was elected Third Committee Rapporteur at the 2013 Annual Session in Istanbul and has been re-elected twice. She is a member of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and Reform of the OSCE and the Sub-

Committee on Rules of Procedure and former OSCE PA Special Representative on National Minorities in Central and South East Europe. Comic, the Deputy Speaker of the Serbian National Assembly, has been a Member of Parliament since 2000 and a delegate to the PA since 2005. She chaired the Foreign Affairs Committee from 2004 to 2007 and is currently a member of the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality, the Environmental Protection Committee, the European Integration Committee and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.











Secretary General
Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly, and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and has a permanent staff of 18, including four staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Deputy Secretary
General
Semyon Dzakhaev



Special
Representative
Andreas Nothelle



Director of Elections
Andreas Baker



Assistant to the
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Deputy Director of
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Iryna Sabashuk



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Director
Richard Solash



Bringing together 323 parliamentarians from across the 57-nation OSCE region, including Europe, Asia and North America, the OSCE PA provides a forum for parliamentary dialogue, leads election observation missions, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, originally established by the 1990 Paris Summit to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, is the oldest continuing OSCE Institution.

The basic objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States;
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly employs a variety of means:

- A Final Declaration and a number of resolutions and recommendations are adopted each year at the Annual Session in July;
- Committee work addresses important contemporary international issues;
- Programmes and Seminars designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions to areas of latent or active crisis.



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