

REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY 15TH WINTER MEETING VIENNA, AUSTRIA



25-26 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT ON THE 2016 WINTER MEETING OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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Summary



The OSCE PA Winter Meeting is held every February at the OSCE's headquarters in Vienna.

Since February 2002, the OSCE PA has held an annual Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna. The second largest event in the OSCE PA calendar, the Winter Meeting provides an opportunity for the three General Committees to hold discussions on timely issues and to be briefed by high-level OSCE officials.

More than 250 parliamentarians from across the OSCE's 57 participating States and Partners for Co-operation, including several Speakers of Parliament, participated in the Parliamentary Assembly's 15th Winter Meeting at the Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna on 25-26 February 2016.

The opening session included welcoming remarks by OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria), as well as speeches by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship, Gernot Erler (MP, Germany).

The OSCE PA's three general committees met to hear addresses by high-level OSCE officials and from committee rapporteurs, who offered presentations on their ideas for reports and draft resolutions to be developed for the OSCE PA's 25th Annual Session in Georgia. Debate in the committees focused on combatting terrorism, the economic effects of the migration crisis, the crisis in and around Ukraine, and the human rights of refugees and migrants.

Senior OSCE officials participating in the two-day meeting included Secretary General Lamberto Zannier; ODIHR Director Michael Georg Link; Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatovic; High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors; Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden; Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats Alexey Lyzhenkov; and Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Madina Jarbussynova. OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (MP, Canada) also addressed the Assembly.

The Standing Committee met on 25 February to hear reports from OSCE PA special representatives, the leaders of recent election observation missions and ad hoc committees, President Kanerva, Treasurer Doris Barnett, Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure Peter Bowness, and Secretary General Roberto Montella.

Migration crisis features prominently at Winter Meeting

The refugee and migrant crisis and efforts to strengthen the international community's collective response were central themes of parliamentary debate and keynote presentations at the 15th Winter Meeting. The leadership of the Assembly's Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions presented a special report on the topic, which recommended, inter alia, that the OSCE develop an Organization-wide response, with clearly identified roles and responsibilities for each OSCE body.

The meeting also featured a special debate on the refugee and migrant crisis, which included interventions by dozens of parliamentarians from across the OSCE region, as well as a keynote address by former OSCE PA Member Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that this crisis is testing our unity, our principle of diversity, [and] our principles of tolerance and openness," Stylianides said. He noted the historical imperative of helping the refugees coming to European shores, "to provide to these desperate people shelter and basic needs."

Opening Joint Session of the General Committees



Christine Muttonen



Ilkka Kanerva

The joint session of the three general committees was opened and chaired by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva and included addresses by OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen, as well as Gernot Erler, Special Representative of the Federal Government of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship. The opening plenary also featured speeches by speakers of parliament from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

Christine Muttonen, Vice-President of the OSCE PA and Special Representative for Central and Eastern Asia

On behalf of the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament, Vice-President Muttonen (MP, Austria) welcomed parliamentarians to Vienna and noted the ongoing importance of interparliamentary dialogue. She stressed that the current crises in Europe cannot be solved by a single country and instead need the attention and co-operation on all levels of the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE.

The enhancement of international co-operation is particularly important in dealing with the migration crisis, said Muttonen, with the most affected countries in need of assistance and stabilization. She especially underlined the situation of female refugees, as they face exceedingly dangerous circumstances, and emphasized the important contribution the OSCE field opera-

tions provide by working together with border control authorities. She stressed, however, that the OSCE and the OSCE PA could deliver more and should improve how they utilize their instruments in order to manage current and future challenges.

Ilkka Kanerva, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

President Kanerva (MP, Finland) outlined a number of crises affecting the OSCE area, including the threat of terrorism and the crisis in and around Ukraine. Regarding the migration crisis, the President urged greater synergy and co-operation to address the situation. “All of our problem-solving skills are needed in the face of the crisis of migrants and refugees, the topic at the top of our agenda at this year’s meeting,” Kanerva said. “I believe that the OSCE and the PA are extremely well-suited to address this crisis because of our unique, comprehensive approach to security that this critical situation requires.”

He was pleased to note that there was much overlap between the PA’s and the German Chairmanship’s agendas for 2016 and stated that he was looking forward to working together. Furthermore, President Kanerva expressed his serious concern about the situation in Ukraine and the incomplete implementation of the Minsk Agreements, appealing to all parties involved to fulfill their commitments and adhere to the Agreements.

“All of our problem-solving skills are needed in the face of the crisis of migrants and refugees.”

Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva

Opening Joint Session of the General Committees



More than 250 parliamentarians attended the OSCE PA's 15th Winter Meeting on 25-26 February 2016.

Gernot Erler, Special Representative of the Federal Government of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship

The German Chairmanship's Special Representative addressed the joint session with remarks on how crucial the PA's work is in maintaining security and stability. He highlighted the OSCE's most important fields of activity, noting that besides engaging in conflict management, the OSCE and all its Institutions offer important platforms where shared threats to security can be discussed. Also, the OSCE is promoting good governance and human rights, and striving for greater involvement of civil society, he said.

Erler commended the close co-operation between the PA and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on election monitoring, and closed his speech by stating that there was no "silver bullet" for the common problems in the OSCE area. However, the OSCE's Institutions, including the PA, were moving slowly but surely towards rebuilding security, trust and co-operation.

Question & Answer Session

The question and answer session was opened by interventions by two speakers of parliament from the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Sergey Naryshkin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation and Head of the Delegation of the Federal Assembly of the Rus-

sian Federation to the OSCE PA, focused on NATO's eastward expansion and the military alliance's relationship with the Russian Federation, questioning the alleged influence of NATO in the affairs of the OSCE.

In his speech, Kazakh Senate Chairman Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called upon stakeholders in Ukraine to refrain from confrontational rhetoric and suggested a contact group for Ukraine within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. He stated his belief that diplomatic efforts can still help trigger progress in military conflicts, as the recently negotiated truce in the Syrian conflict demonstrated.

Remarks offered by the Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Canadian, Swiss, Azerbaijani and French delegations touched upon the various challenges in the OSCE region in general, with many speakers concentrating on the Ukraine conflict and its impact on the Organization and the region.

Responding to questions from parliamentarians regarding gender, migration and a number of other issues, Erler said that in addition to the focus on gender equality and its inclusion in the OSCE's areas of work, the Organization must address poverty and social deprivation in order to tackle the refugee and migrant crisis more effectively.

Finally, Erler emphasized that both the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and the crisis in and around Ukraine needed more initiatives on the national and international levels and asked for the parties' trust in the OSCE to find political solutions to these challenges.





General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



Roger Wicker chairs the First Committee meeting on 26 February.

United States Senator Roger Wicker, the Chair of the First Committee, opened the session on 26 February with a reference to the tragic impact that violent extremism is having throughout the OSCE area. He noted that terrorism requires international co-operation and reminded parliamentarians that they have a special role to play in enhancing the level of dialogue both nationally and internationally. He further stated that the crisis in and around Ukraine is compromising trust between OSCE participating States and reiterated the OSCE's commitment to preventing another frozen conflict from emerging in the OSCE area.

Margareta Cederfelt, Rapporteur of the First Committee

Committee Rapporteur Margareta Cederfelt (MP, Sweden) outlined five main points to be included in her report and draft resolution for the 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi: transnational terrorism, the Ukraine crisis, protracted conflicts, women in armed conflict, and the link between security and democracy. She highlighted that countering transnational terrorism is complicated by the global refugee and migrant crisis, which is now impacting nearly all OSCE countries.

She further reiterated the importance of achieving a political solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine as a top priority for the international community. She urged parliamentarians to continue promoting good governance in Ukraine and building confidence based on the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. She welcomed the German OSCE Chairmanship's priorities for 2016, particularly the emphasis on solving the protracted conflicts in the region by means of current negotiating formats and mechanisms. She also pointed

out that greater involvement of women in decision-making and conflict mediation is vital to building long-term stability and security. Finally, Cederfelt highlighted that the OSCE PA has the democratic element needed for oversight of OSCE actions and decision-making processes and that parliamentarians are well-equipped to strengthen the link between security and democracy.

Ambassador Cristian Istrate, Chair of the Security Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council

Amb. Istrate said that in his view, the OSCE could benefit from its experience in border management, policing and countering organized crime in addressing the nexus between irregular migration and the trafficking of human beings. He underlined the importance in this regard for national parliaments to support the OSCE's needs in order to address these challenges.

Currently, the Security Committee is undertaking a concrete role in supporting the implementation of commitments through voluntary reporting by the participating States that will then be compiled into a synopsis of best practices so as to reinforce action in this field, he said. He therefore urged parliamentarians to turn words into action and be more actively involved so that the OSCE can better identify effective responses to terrorism.

Amb. Istrate said that countering terrorism is a shared responsibility and that is why the implementation of OSCE commitments should remain an integral part of participating States' efforts to address it. He concluded by noting that the Security Committee stands ready to support the implementation of the OSCE mandate of countering transnational threats.

Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

High Commissioner Thors identified aggressive nationalism, polarization and the exploitation of minority issues for political purposes as worrying trends that she has been observing in the OSCE area. She highlighted

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

three main issues that have her attention – refugees, the formation of historical narratives and how societies perceive them, and the UN development goals 2030. She stated that the current migration crisis has created a climate of distrust and warned that tensions may continue to rise. It is important that Europe respond appropriately to the crisis in the short term, she said, which could foreshadow the way that resettled refugees are treated in the long term.

Finally, in relation to the UN development goals, she said that the concept of inclusiveness was gaining prominence and that development must be reached at all levels and its benefits spread throughout society, including in minority populations.

Alexey Lyzhenkov, OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats

Alexey Lyzhenkov noted that the OSCE holds Organization-wide, regional, sub-regional and national activities to promote good practices and networking, to raise awareness and to build capacity among governments, civil society and businesses. In concrete terms, he discussed the communication campaign launched by the OSCE Secretary General and the 2015 Serbian Chairmanship, “OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism”. He highlighted that this campaign is aimed at countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism and underlined that in its first six months, the campaign reached some four million people. Another successful initiative he highlighted was “Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism”, which has a focus on empowering civil society and co-ordinating

responses to terrorism. To conclude, he noted that as the terrorist threat evolves in multifaceted ways, participating States should implement obligations under universal anti-terrorist conventions, various UN resolutions and OSCE commitments.

Special Debate: “Transnational Security in the OSCE Area: Confronting Terrorism”

During the debate, OSCE parliamentarians raised a number of issues including the threat of terrorism, the crisis in and around Ukraine and frozen conflicts in the OSCE area. Parliamentarians expressed their readiness to support the implementation of the OSCE mandate of countering transnational threats. Terrorism was identified as a major security risk for the OSCE area and a shared responsibility that required the active involvement and contribution of all participating States.

A number of parliamentarians expressed concern over the increased violence in Eastern Ukraine and highlighted the need for the full implementation of the Minsk commitments. The stalled investigation of the MH17 flight was also raised as a key issue that needed to be addressed. It was generally agreed that ongoing dialogue remained a key prerequisite for rebuilding confidence in the OSCE area.

In relation to protracted conflicts, the importance of the greater involvement of women and the issue of internally displaced people and their resettlement were highlighted. Parliamentarians agreed that in order to achieve genuine security, they must build dispute resolution mechanisms on the rule of law and reinforce OSCE activities on the ground.

Mediterranean issues in focus at side meeting



Michel Voisin (second from left) chairs meeting with Mediterranean Partners.

OSCE PA Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs Michel Voisin (MP, France) convened a meeting with several OSCE Mediterranean Partners on 25 February. The meeting included the participation of parliamentarians and diplomatic representatives from Algeria, Israel, Morocco, and two representatives from the Palestinian Legislative Council. Discussions focused on ways to enhance the Mediterranean dimension

of the Assembly’s work and ideas to strengthen the role of the Assembly’s Mediterranean Forum, as well as common issues and challenges facing the Mediterranean region.

Voisin was appointed the Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs in January 2016.

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment



Nilza Sena

Nilza Sena (MP, Portugal), Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, opened the meeting on 25 February by introducing the agenda and the speakers, including Andreas Papadakis, Chair of OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee, and Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Rapporteur Marietta Tidei (MP, Italy) presented her preliminary ideas for the report and draft resolution to be debated by the committee at the 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi.

Marietta Tidei, Rapporteur of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Tech- nology and the Environment

In wide-ranging remarks, Tidei spoke about climate change; migration; economic management; and water, food and energy security. Regarding climate change, she described the importance of the recently signed COP 21 agreement in Paris, which she pointed out aims not to halt the effects of climate change, but to mitigate them. Tidei cited figures by experts that the effects of global warming could push the number of climate refugees into the millions in coming years and that all countries, be they destination, transit or origin, should share the burden in order to counter and adapt to this trend.

Speaking about water management, the rapporteur emphasized the significance of addressing the polluting of the Caspian Sea and the shrinking of the Aral Sea. Regarding energy security, she pointed out that alternatives to hydrocarbons as the world's primary energy source must be developed. Finally,

Tidei called for enhanced economic co-operation among OSCE participating States in the spirit of Helsinki, including by rethinking the usefulness of economic sanctions, bearing in mind the complex economic context and the continued need to promote economic recovery.

Ambassador Andreas Papadakis, Chair of OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee

Ambassador Andreas Papadakis presented the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee (EEC) work plan for 2016. He provided an overview of the seven upcoming thematic EEC meetings, which will focus on the issues of customs and transport administration, labour migration policies, trade facilitation and economic co-operation, business climate, energy, water governance and disaster risk reduction and climate change in the OSCE context. He emphasized the cross-dimensional focus of many of the topics in question and the interest in holding joint meetings with the other committees.

Papadakis also announced that the theme of the 2016 Economic and Environmental Forum is good governance in the OSCE area. Papadakis concluded by addressing the need for recognition of women's political participation as essential to security and stability in the OSCE area, referring the EEC's intention to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach to its activities.

Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, Co- ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Yigitgüden outlined the thematic priorities of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) for 2016. The main activities in focus, he said, include the fight against corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism, harmonization of policies in border crossing procedures, customs and transport, promoting economic connectivity, water governance, management and diplomacy, gender policies for migrants and risk-reduction policies. He noted that another important pillar for his office was promoting dialogue in environ-

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

ment and security issues and that good governance, as the topic for the 2016 Economic and Environmental Forum remained at the core of OCEEA's efforts in its actions.

Yigitgüden went on to highlight the importance of interagency work between the OCEEA and other agencies and the important work developed in that co-operative attitude. Finally the Co-ordinator informed the audience that his office would take into account the decisions of the ministerial meeting in Kyiv in 2013 and that it would like to involve parliamentarians in the discussions, sharing good practices and experience.

Special Debate: "Migration management: opportunities and challenges to the economy in the OSCE region"

Opening the Second Committee's special debate, Committee Vice-Chair Nilza Sena pointed out that while migration is seen by many governments as a burden that must be shared more equitably, there are also numerous advantages to be gained from integrating migrants, who often bring needed skills and help spur economic growth. She noted that effective management is crucial to the economic and social development of countries of origin and destination, and how good co-operation and close partnerships between governments, governmental agencies and relevant international and regional organizations are key factors in finding effective solutions to migration challenges.

Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden reaffirmed that the OCEEA has developed much work in the area of migration together with other organizations, having pioneered a guide on gender-sensitive migration policies and improving the collection of migration data. Yigitgüden pointed out that fears connected with migration should not overcome our need for collective stability. Managing migration should be a shared responsibility, in which there is a need for concerted labour migration policies, looking at the environmental impact of migration in rural situations and a more flexible approach to mobility.



In her presentation, Marietta Tidei emphasized that in her opinion closing borders cannot be a solution to the crisis. Tidei was critical of European countries' responses, which she said have adversely impacted the most vulnerable. As a European, she said she feels ashamed that according to the UNHCR, 85 per cent of all refugees have been taken in by less-developed countries and European countries are still considering ways to put up barriers. She concluded by offering an overview of how migrants have become crucial for the Italian economy and how it is crucial for all States to take up their collective responsibility and consider future generations.

The presentations of the keynote speakers were followed by a lively debate, in which OSCE parliamentarians raised various issues related to the harmonization of international trade rules, and transport and transit corridors as means to solve the economic crisis and also the importance of looking at geopolitical stability and security from an environmental perspective. Referring to the issue of migration, parliamentarians generally agreed that migrants offer invaluable opportunities for innovation and human capital, that it is crucial to find ways to integrate them and to provide security by fighting against all forms of discrimination and intolerance.







General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Isabel Santos chairs the Third Committee meeting.

Opening the meeting of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions on 25 February, Chair Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) highlighted some of the key areas of concern regarding human rights in the OSCE region. She called for an end to classifying NGOs as foreign agents, the release of political prisoners and the closure of Guantanamo. She also described her work addressing the refugee and migrant crisis.

Gordana Comic, Rapporteur of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Gordana Comic (MP, Serbia) outlined her ideas for her report and draft resolution to be considered at the 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi, Georgia. She noted that the OSCE region is facing a “crisis of leaders and ideas,” speaking of her concern over the stigmatization of migrants and refugees. She expressed concern that the issue of human rights is dropping from the agendas of participating States and not given the serious consideration it deserves. A number of suggestions for the report were heard from the floor including the need to focus on taking real action on the refugee and migrant crisis as well as a call to ensure the burden is shared equitably between countries.

Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the



Third Committee Vice-Chair Ivana Dobesova (right) greets Amb. Katja Pehrman.

Media Dunja Mijatovic noted the shrinking space for civil society and NGOs in the OSCE region and stressed that media freedom is on the decline. Mijatovic said that there is no such thing as a right not to be offended, and that fear of offending is leading to unwarranted self-censorship. She also spoke about her office’s efforts to help combat propaganda through work with Ukrainian and Russian journalists.

She concluded by appealing for all measures to increase security to be done with consideration for human rights and the importance for all of us to stand up for our values and to avoid self-censorship.

Michael Georg Link, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Link noted the added value of parliamentarians observing elections and stressed that ODIHR and the PA working together results in the highest standard for election observation. He expressed hope that if the OSCE is called to observe elections in the Donbas region of Ukraine, the PA would be willing to take part.

Link noted the important monitoring work of the OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, and discussed issues related to the rights of migrants and refugees. He highlighted ODIHR’s Guantanamo report released in 2015 and its findings that the U.S.-run facility contravenes a number of OSCE commitments on human rights. He further provided an overview of ODIHR’s other ongoing activities, noting increased levels of work on intolerance against religious groups and the refugee and migrant crisis.

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Ambassador Katja Pehrman, Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representa- tive of Finland to the OSCE

Amb. Pehrman spoke of her plans for the year, focusing in particular on the need for more efforts to fight discrimination against people with disabilities. She cited the PA's 2014 Baku Declaration's recommendation for increased efforts to fight discrimination against people with disabilities and stated her hope that the PA and the Permanent Council's Human Dimension Committee can work together in this area.

Stressing the importance of co-operation with the PA on human rights, Pehrman said she looked forward to the Human Dimension Session in June in which an OSCE PA Third Committee representative is expected to participate. She highlighted the side event on gender which took place at the Winter Meeting as a good example of co-operation between the parliamentary and governmental sides.

Debate

Nine speakers participated in the debate, with praise offered for Mijatovic's work and questions about what more can be done by the PA to support media freedom. In response, Mijatovic reminded the parliamentarians of their power as legislators to make laws in line with OSCE commitments. Mijatovic also said that in general, all the international mechanisms needed to promote media freedom exist, they just need proper

enforcement. Other issues raised involved relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with Link reporting on his recent visit to Azerbaijan.

Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

Amb. Jarbussynova provided an overview of the current situation of the refugee and migrant crisis. Offering a general overview of her office's activities, in particular its work in Ukraine and regional initiatives in South East Europe, she stressed that closing borders only results in increased reliance on smugglers and traffickers by those trying to reach Europe, urging stronger efforts to prosecute offenders.

Special Debate: "The human rights of migrants and refugees"

The debate that followed featured a range of opinions on the issue of the refugee and migrant crisis. There was a strong condemnation of trafficking with the disturbing report that 12,000 children have disappeared in the EU raised as a concern. There was agreement on the need not to alienate refugees and to fight xenophobia towards people fleeing conflict, while also ensuring that migrants are effectively screened for links to violent extremism. The countries in the south of Europe spoke of the need for a multilateral approach to solve the crisis and of their concern that certain countries are being shouldered with a greater burden than others.

Parliamentarians consider gender issues at side event



Hedy Fry addresses the side event.

Finland's Delegation to the OSCE PA organized a side event on women's political participation on 25 February. OSCE PA President Kanerva opened the meeting by describing Finland's achievements in advancing and mainstreaming the participation of women in the political process, including by increasing the number of women represented in parliament.

Dr. Hedy Fry, the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Gender Issues, advocated an action-oriented approach for the OSCE that would provide an example to the participating States. She also underlined the important role that political parties play in promoting women's access to elected office and leadership positions.





Standing Committee Meeting



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

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva opened the Standing Committee meeting on 25 February with a report on his activities since the Parliamentary Assembly's last meeting in Ulaanbaatar. He noted that his key areas of focus have been the crisis in and around Ukraine, ways for the OSCE and its participating States to take greater action in response to the migration crisis, and finally, the threat of terrorism.

The President highlighted his trip to Kyiv in late October 2015, where his meetings focused on the status of the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and Ukraine's ongoing reform process. He also discussed his visit to the government-controlled Donetsk oblast and the frontline with the separatist-held areas.

Kanerva expressed his regret for not having been able to participate in the trip to the South Caucasus in January 2016 due to illness. However, he underlined his satisfaction that the high-level delegation he appointed to replace him had a very productive visit. President Kanerva also expressed support for the new OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Secretary General, Roberto Montella, and welcomed his new ideas for reforms.

Treasurer Doris Barnett (MP, Germany) noted that the management of the budget complied with and reflected the efforts of national legislators to minimize expenses and remain within the objectives of austerity and accountability. She noted that she was able to assess this during her working visit to Copenhagen earlier in the month when she met with the independent external auditor. She also used the opportunity to welcome Secretary General Montella's initiative to modernize the work of the Secretariat by introducing new staff regulations.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure, British Lord Peter Bowness, told the Standing Committee that the process for proposing rules changes should be simplified. He suggested that the Rules Committee should

receive the recommendations which would then be circulated to delegations, and if they meet general approval, the Rules Committee would then put those principles in writing and implement them as an agreed rule change. He also suggested that consideration be given to modifying the working practices of the Assembly.

Vice-President Alain Neri (MP, France) took the floor to speak about migration, and specifically noted that the issue of economic migrants should be addressed and that the crime of human smuggling must be tackled. Toward this end, he expressed support for the creation of an ad hoc committee on migration. President Kanerva stated his full support for the idea, and the proposal was agreed to by the Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee also heard reports from Special Representative on Central and Eastern Asia Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria), Special Representative on OSCE Border Issues Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain), Special Representative on Anti-Terrorism Nikolay Kovalev (MP, Russia), Special Representative on the South Caucasus Kristian Vigenin (MP, Bulgaria), Special Representative for Arctic Issues Ola Elvestuen (MP, Norway), Special Representative for Afghanistan Michel Voisin (MP, France), Special Representative for the Baltic Sea Area Juergen Klimke (MP, Germany), and Special Representative on South East Europe Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia).

Leaders of recent election observation missions to Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Belarus also briefed the Standing Committee.

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella described the status of implementing his priorities, including modernizing the Secretariat to further improve the way it supports Members. He explained that his emphasis is on both internal reform, including streamlining the working practices of the Secretariat, and external outreach, including maintaining close co-operation with the OSCE governmental side and with other parliamentary assemblies.



Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



The panel of the closing joint session of the general committees on 26 February.

Chaired by President Ilkka Kanerva, the closing joint session of the general committees included interventions by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry. The joint session closed with a debate on “The refugee and migrant crisis in Europe and efforts to strengthen the collective response”, introduced with a keynote address by EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides.

Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE

OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier expressed appreciation to OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva and OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella for their willingness to work together with the governmental side of the OSCE in closer co-ordination, which he said will enable the OSCE to become a more effective platform for dialogue and action.

Zannier described the work done by the OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, where the OSCE is working to strengthen the ceasefire and expand its functions, adding technology and preparing technical solutions in order to better protect its monitors in the country. Zannier also mentioned the OSCE’s co-operation with its partners such as the EU in South East Europe, where the Organization has a number of field offices involved in a spectrum of areas, and its presence in South Caucasus and Central Asia where the OSCE is one of the biggest presences of any international organization.

Referring to the OSCE’s engagement in the migration crisis, Zannier held that all participants should reflect together during the planned Security Days event, working to upgrade the current border management concept and working with Europol in combating organized crime and human trafficking. Speaking about the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, Zannier mentioned terrorism, climate change as well as migration in the list of security challenges that the Organization should keep on the agenda, asking the parliamentarians for their support in helping the OSCE develop and promote dialogue with the different actors.

Hedy Fry, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues

In her address, Hedy Fry (MP, Canada) pointed out that gender equality must be front and center when addressing other issues on the OSCE’s agenda. The OSCE and its participating States would benefit from more direct involvement of women in tackling all sorts of challenges in the OSCE region, including conflict resolution, migration, economic problems and more, the Special Representative said.

Providing women and girls with education and opportunities, she said, would end their vulnerability, since promoting equality in gender would allow women and men to move forward together. Fry affirmed a need for political will in solving this issue and pointed out that parliamentarians can lead by example in this field, by taking concrete action and not merely by discussing gender equality.

Special Debate on the Refugee and Migrant Crisis



Christos Stylianides

Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management

Speaking about the current migration crisis, EU Commissioner and former PA Member Stylianides urged greater dialogue and a more coordinated response to the situation. The crisis has put the EU under great pressure, he said, testing its unity and principles, but fundamentally, this is a humanitarian crisis, in which all actors have an obligation to fulfill their commitments. While he acknowledged the need to protect the EU's external borders, Stylianides argued that raising walls will not solve the problem.

Stylianides called on OSCE parliamentarians to pledge their support to the resolution of the Syrian crisis, stopping the attacks on civilians, granting aid organizations full access to the people in need and free passage to safety in order to ameliorate the suffering of the Syrian people. Without forgetting Syria's neighbouring countries and their immense contributions, the EU Commissioner said that governments should continue to work closely together and help Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey in making the everyday life of refugees better.

Referring to the challenges felt by many European countries in dealing with the migration crisis, Stylianides shared some of the EU

Commission's work within the Western Balkans and Greece and the contingency plan being prepared for the upcoming spring, stating that the EU will stand by all countries to help resolve the situation on the ground, focusing their action on the most vulnerable and providing development opportunities for both states and people.

As the first speaker in the special debate, OSCE PA Third Committee Chair Isabel Santos presented a report prepared by the leadership of her committee sharing the ideas, observations and recommendations resulting from their trips to Turkey, Italy, Serbia and the Czech Republic. She described lessons learned from their visits to refugee centers, OSCE field presences, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, the Red Cross and the EU, as well as NGOs, noting that the Parliamentary Assembly has an important role to play in addressing this crisis.

In the debate, parliamentarians from countries including Greece, Canada, France, Slovenia, Italy, Serbia, United Kingdom, and Algeria participated.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that this crisis is testing our unity, our principle of diversity, our principles of tolerance and openness. It even tests our determination to safeguard the vision of the founding fathers for a united Europe."

EU Commissioner Christos Stylianides

Issues discussed included burden-sharing, addressing the root causes of the crisis, the dangers of a fragmented approach, EU policy strengths and shortcomings, the implementation of quotas, funding to origin and arrival countries, the social and economic integration of migrants, the importance of close engagement with the OSCE's Mediterranean Partner States, issues of criminality and human trafficking associated with the crisis, and the human rights of migrants and refugees.

Parliamentarians also discussed several of the proposals in the report prepared by the Third Committee leadership, including the idea of creating a high-level co-ordinating position to strengthen the Organization's work on migration. Other ideas generally supported by Members included establishing a thematic field mission on migration and to enhance co-operation with the OSCE's Mediterranean Partners by increasing parliamentary-level exchanges of best practices, as well as recommendations to provide increased financial and political aid to countries bordering Syria, and develop a better functioning resettlement mechanism.









**PROGRAMME OF THE 15th WINTER MEETING
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

Vienna, 25-26 February 2016

Thursday, 25 February 2016

- 09.00 – 11.45 **Standing Committee Meeting** (*Ratsaal, 5th floor*)
- 12.00 – 13.15 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** (*Neuer Saal, 2nd floor*)
Address by Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Member of the Austrian Parliament, Ms. Christine Muttonen

Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Ilkka Kanerva

Address by the Special Representative of the Federal Government of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship, Mr. Gernot Erler, followed by a question & answer session
- 13.15 – 15.15 Lunch Break
- 15.15 – 18.00 **General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions**
(*Neuer Saal, 2nd floor*)
- 15.15 – 18.00 **General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment** (*Ratsaal, 5th floor*)

Friday, 26 February 2016

- 09.00 – 11.45 **General Committee on Political Affairs and Security** (*Neuer Saal, 2nd floor*)
- 11.45 – 13.30 Lunch break
- 13.30 – 16.30 **Joint Session of the three General Committees:** (*Neuer Saal, 2nd floor*)
Report by the Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, followed by a question & answer session

Report by the OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues, Dr. Hedy Fry, followed by a debate

Special Debate: *The migrant and refugee crisis in the OSCE area: strengthening the collective response*

Closure by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Ilkka Kanerva

* * *



Secretary General
Roberto Montella

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 Roberto Montella, and has a permanent staff of 16, including three 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
Secretary General
Dana Bjerregaard



Deputy Director of
Administration
Marc Carillet



Programme Officer
Maria Chepurina



Office Assistant
Farimah Daftary



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Co-ordinator
Odile LeLarge



Administrative
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Manager
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Senior Policy
Analyst
Francesco Pagani



Editorial Director
Nat Parry



IT Specialist
Stephen Paul



Programme Officer
Loic Poulain



Operations Officer
Iryna Sabashuk



Bringing together 323 parliamentarians from across the 57-nation OSCE region, 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 are designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions are deployed to areas of latent or active crisis.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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