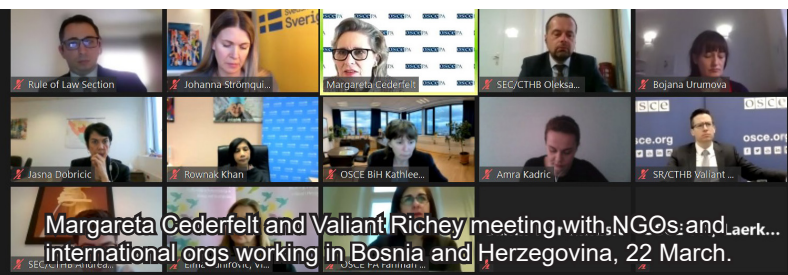


## Joint virtual meetings focus on trafficking of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina



In preparation for an upcoming field visit, OSCE PA Vice-President and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey are participating in a series of online meetings this week focusing on combating human trafficking along migration routes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On Monday and Tuesday, Cederfelt and Richey met with key interlocutors in Sarajevo including the National anti-trafficking Coordinator and members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Human Rights, as well as representatives of international governmental organizations including the Council of Europe, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, and non-governmental organizations engaged in migration issues.

Discussions focused on enhancing the effectiveness of procedures for identifying and protecting victims of trafficking in mixed

migration flows and capacity building, with a focus on vulnerable categories such as women and unaccompanied minors. Interlocutors underlined the need to increase the awareness of migrants about the risks of trafficking and how to report it, and highlighted lack of trust in authorities as well as insufficient numbers of interpreters as significant barriers to the identification of potential victims. Recommendations were offered on how to improve prosecution and encourage proper sentencing such as through training of prosecutors and judges. Some also expressed concern about pushbacks at the borders.

The need for more co-ordination in the area of migration management at the national and regional levels as well as an adequate reception system that is better adapted to accommodate vulnerable categories of migrants was also highlighted. Some interlocutors expressed frustration over the lack of direct financing by the European Commission for migration-related activities and underlined the need for improved co-operation with countries of origin in the area of readmission of migrants.

Cederfelt and Richey also met with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina Kathleen Kavalec and senior Mission staff, as well as the Swedish Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, a key partner in the fight against trafficking and representing the OSCE Swedish Chairpersonship.

The programme concludes on Thursday with a meeting with the Chief Prosecutor. The meetings have been facilitated by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## OSCE PA leaders participate in roundtable on Belarus, urge timetable for political reforms

Speaking Monday at the Kalinowski Forum, a roundtable of leaders and experts focused on the future of Belarus, OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) stressed the need for parliamentarians to continue reminding national governments of issues related to democratic development in Belarus.

The OSCE PA, he said, remains ready to support Belarus through expert advice on constitutional, electoral, and other reforms. President Bowness underlined the importance for Belarusian authorities and parliamentarians to communicate a consistent timeline and scope of the reported constitutional and political reforms as a means of promoting trust.

“As we have on other issues of relevance to the OSCE and

when dealing with other OSCE participating States, we will continue to make it clear that while we remain committed to open dialogue with our colleagues in the Belarusian Parliament, we are not ready to compromise on fundamental principles,” Bowness said. Highlighting the work of OSCE PA Special Representative on Eastern Europe Daniela De Ridder, whose mandate covers Belarus, President Bowness noted her efforts in maintaining constructive communication both with Members of the OSCE PA’s Belarusian Delegation and with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

In addition to President Bowness, the forum featured OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Chris Smith (United States), who expressed hope that the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people will be met.

## SG and financial team discuss FY 2021-22 budget with OSCE PA Treasurer Juel-Jensen

Starting preparations for next year’s budget, OSCE PA Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen (Denmark) met Tuesday in Copenhagen with Secretary General Roberto Montella and his financial team. In accordance with the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure the Treasurer will present his preliminary budgetary proposal to the Bureau at its next meeting scheduled for 19 April. Once

the Bureau has discussed and agreed on the proposal it will be circulated to the Standing Committee which will decide on its approval. Juel-Jensen noted that the proposed budget will reflect the needs of the Assembly in full respect of the national parliaments’ contributions while addressing for yet another year the specific situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## OSCE PA International Secretariat hosts virtual meeting with British students

Students from the University of Sussex met virtually with staff of the International Secretariat on 19 March for discussions on the work of the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly. Following an introduction of the group by President of the University of Sussex International Relations Society Jade Midgley, OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallarés provided a general overview of the OSCE PA, and several other staff members briefed the students on various areas of work of the Assembly. The meeting was also joined by SG Roberto Montella.

Topics in focus were the PA’s statutory meetings, election observation, the work of Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives, interaction with the OSCE executive structures, and public outreach. The students were also briefed on the OSCE PA’s Research Assistant Programme, and encouraged to apply. In a lively question and answer session, students raised issues including co-operation with other international organizations, the OSCE’s counter-terrorism work, and challenges of adapting to the realities of COVID-19.