

In address to Permanent Council, Kanerva highlights Ukraine, refugees and reform

Speaking before ambassadors from 57 OSCE participating States last week, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) highlighted the Ukraine crisis, counter-terrorism, and the refugee and migrant crisis as key challenges for the OSCE, also noting the need for organizational reform. The President reported on his recent visit to Ukraine, stressing that it is imperative that OSCE participating States “work towards ensuring full access for the SMM monitors towards the border and to strengthen the embryo of a border mission.”

Kanerva acknowledged that core provisions of the Minsk Agreements will not be fulfilled by the end of 2015, as they should have been, but reiterated his view that their postponement is not necessarily a deal-breaker.

Kanerva also highlighted the Assembly’s 2015 Helsinki Declaration, containing recommendations for the OSCE and its participating States, and the document’s stance in support of Ukraine’s territorial integrity. He further noted the Assembly’s continuing efforts to foster dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian parliamentarians.

On the refugee crisis, the President urged the OSCE to take greater action in response. “From border management to the treatment of minorities to means of promoting human rights and tolerance, the OSCE has many tools at its disposal that can be used in this crisis,” he said.

The Organization should also do more to counter the scourge of terrorism, the President stressed. “The OSCE is perfectly positioned to help countries better co-ordinate their anti-terrorism efforts and help implement best practices. Our collective security is very much at stake,” he said.



Ilkka Kanerva addresses the Permanent Council on 19 November 2015. (Photo: OSCE/Micky Kröll)

President Kanerva encouraged ambassadors to study the Assembly’s Helsinki +40 Project Final Report, which marks this year’s 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act with concrete recommendations for reforming and strengthening the Organization.

The President’s address was generally well received, with a number of ambassadors thanking the PA for its engagement and its consistent reaffirmation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU’s statement noted that the PA has reaffirmed the pressing need for reaching a settlement to the conflict in line with OSCE commitments.

U.S. Ambassador Daniel Baer expressed appreciation for the PA’s commitment to Ukraine and noted his hope that the PA will “continue to shine a spotlight on Russia’s violations of international law.” The Russian Ambassador, Alexander Lukashevich, however, took issue with the PA’s focus and highlighted “the effects of Kyiv’s blockade of Donbas.”

The 19 November address to the Permanent Council was Kanerva’s second speech to the body as PA President. President Kanerva is scheduled to address OSCE foreign ministers at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade on 3 December.

First Committee Rapporteur Cederfelt represents PA at gender workshop in Vienna



Margareta Cederfelt addresses session one of the OSCE gender workshop on 24 November 2015.

Participating in the workshop “Progress and ways forward in realizing economic and social rights” in Vienna on Tuesday, OSCE PA Political Affairs and Security Committee Rapporteur Margareta Cederfelt (MP, Sweden) addressed issues related to women’s access to the labour market and discussed ways to promote women’s economic rights and independence.

Cederfelt emphasized that in the labour market, female workers are more likely to be underrepresented in senior positions of responsibility and management, be paid lower wages, work longer hours, have less job security and face more sexual harassment and discrimination than their male

counterparts. She stressed the importance of strong maternity and paternity policies, as well as childcare programmes, as key elements in promoting equal employment opportunities between women and men and enhancing economic prosperity.

Regarding labour migration, Cederfelt recalled some of the OSCE PA’s recent resolutions on this topic, reiterating recommendations for participating States to implement a gender-sensitive migration policy aimed at the creation of a political and legal environment conducive to equal opportunities for employment for both male and female migrants. She further called for the implementation of a strategy that includes the application of both general provisions on the protection of migrants and provisions designed specifically for the protection of female migrant workers.

This week’s workshop in Vienna was held on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and was organized by the OSCE Gender Section. Cederfelt’s participation was supported by Deputy Director of Administration Marc Carillet.