

## Peter Lord Bowness succeeds George Tsereteli as Assembly President



Peter Lord Bowness and George Tsereteli

George Tsereteli stepped down as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly following the new convocation of the Parliament of Georgia on 11 December, and as the most senior Vice-President of the Assembly, Peter Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) has taken over as President.

"I want to thank President George Tsereteli for his dedication to the OSCE PA and the OSCE. He has been unstinting in giving time and work to our affairs," wrote President Bowness in a letter to the OSCE PA Standing Committee. "The Rules determine that I follow him as President, but I know that I shall not be able to equal his extraordinary commitment."

Tsereteli thanked PA Members for their trust and support he enjoyed during his long years of service in the PA.

"My presidency ends as our Assembly continues to deal with

numerous challenges and urgently needs to address global crises, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, growing threats to democracy and human rights, climate change, radicalization and terrorism, and large-scale human migration. I encourage you to continue your hard work to pursue our unfinished agenda and safeguard the fundamental values and principles of the OSCE," Tsereteli said.

SG Roberto Montella thanked Tsereteli for his leadership and expressed gratitude for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Assembly. At the same time, Montella underlined his and the Secretariat's readiness to start working with President Bowness, noting that his experience, wisdom, and dedication will be instrumental for the Assembly especially in the current challenging period.

In assuming the presidency, Bowness announced he will not run for election during the PA's next Annual Session but will focus on handing over the Assembly in good order and without any commitments that should rightly belong to the new OSCE PA President. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bowness also noted the importance of adopting emergency rules to allow remote elections for the Bureau, should the OSCE PA be unable to meet in person for the Bucharest Annual Session in July 2021.

President Bowness has been a Member of the United Kingdom's Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2007. He was first elected Vice-President in 2015 and re-elected in 2018. He also serves as Chair of the OSCE PA's Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices.

## Henriksen addresses OSCE Human Dimension Committee, urges Paris Charter implementation

Kari Henriksen (Norway), OSCE PA Vice-President and Rapporteur of the Third Committee, spoke Tuesday at an online meeting of the OSCE Human Dimension Committee commemorating the 30th anniversary of Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Recalling the hope and ambition of the Paris Charter, she stressed that in order to truly honor this document, OSCE countries must fully implement it.

"We should be clear about how impressive the achievements of thirty years ago really were," she said. "The optimism in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is a stark contrast to today's more pessimistic outlook."

Henriksen said that the failures to uphold key principles such as the freedom of expression, assembly, and conscience are virtually a daily occurrence in some parts of the OSCE. She proposed four areas of focus in order to help move towards implementation: Confidence, Inclusion, Protection and Legislation. It is important to build confidence in institutions, she said, and to prioritize inclusion to ensure universal respect for human rights. Protection, especially in conflict areas, is also crucial,



Kari Henriksen addresses the Human Dimension Committee, 15 Dec.

she said, and legislation is needed for protecting and promoting human rights.

"Countries must not be allowed to hide behind legalities," she said. "Violations of human rights are still violations even if parliaments authorize them through legislation." This means that parliamentarians must work to promote good legal frameworks that fulfill commitments. Read her full remarks: <https://bit.ly/3oXCQKG>

## Featured tweets @oscepa

OSCE PA Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) tweeted on 9 December about a webinar held in the Swedish Riksdag. "The Swedish delegation to @oscepa at the Swedish Parliament hosted a webinar in the Parliament on the OSCE election observation in US," she wrote. The webinar took place on 8 December and featured participation from several members of the Swedish Delegation who participated in the US election observation mission last month.

More information and video of the event is available here: <http://bit.ly/2Wj9TMG>



Margareta Cederfelt  
@MCederfelt

The Swedish delegation to @oscepa at the Swedish Parliament hosted a webinar in the Parliament on the OSCE election observation in US. #USElection2020 #uspresidentialelection2020 #USElection #uspresident riksdagen.se/sv/aktuellt/20...