

REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY 14TH WINTER MEETING VIENNA, AUSTRIA 18-20 FEBRUARY 2015



REPORT ON THE 2015 WINTER MEETING OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
MEDITERRANEAN FORUM	2
OPENING JOINT SESSION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEES	4
GENERAL COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY	8
GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT	10
GENERAL COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS	14
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING	18
CLOSING JOINT SESSION OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEES	20

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.

On behalf of the Austrian Parliament, OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) welcomed to Vienna more than 200 parliamentarians from 50 OSCE participating States who gathered on 18-20 February 2015 at the Hofburg Congress Centre for the Assembly's 14th Winter Meeting.

In his opening remarks, Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) noted that as a year of several important milestones and anniversaries, 2015 offers opportunities to reflect on achievements and setbacks as the challenges of the 21st century are tackled, including the crisis in and around Ukraine. Stressing that the escalation of violence in Ukraine has been unacceptable, the President said that the internationally brokered plan to end the conflict must not be derailed.

Also addressing the opening joint session was OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, who described the Ukraine crisis as a "very difficult moment for the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions." The crisis was the focus of several discussions and keynote presentations throughout the Winter Meeting, culminating in the Special Debate held on 20 February.

For the first time, the 2015 Winter Meeting included the Assembly's Mediterranean Forum, held on 18 February. Vice-President Isabel Pozuelo (MP, Spain) chaired the Forum, which was addressed by Ambassador Rudiger Ludeking, Chair of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE. Parliamentary and diplomatic representatives from OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation also spoke at the Forum. Topics included migration, threats posed by violent extremism, challenges

of the Arab Spring and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Also on 18 February, the Parliamentary Assembly's Bureau met to consider an official challenge by the OSCE PA's Ukrainian Delegation regarding the Russian Federation's designation of Olga Kovitidi as a Member of the OSCE PA representing the de facto government of Crimea. Following the recommendation of a Credentials Committee that had met earlier, the Bureau unanimously rejected the designation of Kovitidi, citing Rule 1.1 and Rule 3 of the PA's Rules of Procedure.

Meetings of the PA's three general committees on 19 February featured keynote addresses by OSCE officials and other experts in the fields of politico-military affairs, the economic-environmental dimension and human rights. OSCE PA rapporteurs also presented to the committees their preliminary ideas for the reports and draft resolutions to be considered at the 2015 Annual Session.

The Standing Committee met on 20 February and heard reports from the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary General, and the Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure, as well as leaders of recent election observation missions, Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees and OSCE PA Special Representatives. Heads of National Delegations also offered reports on preparations for upcoming Parliamentary Assembly meetings.

Ambassadors Heidi Tagliavini, Ertugrul Apakan and Adam Kobieracki, all top OSCE officials working on the Ukraine crisis, offered remarks ahead of the Special Debate on 20 February. Dozens of parliamentarians participated in the debate, including several members of the Ukrainian and Russian Delegations to the OSCE PA.

Mediterranean Forum



Isabel Pozuelo opens the Mediterranean Forum.

Chaired by Vice-President Isabel Pozuelo (MP, Spain), the Mediterranean Forum on 18 February heard a presentation by Amb. Rudiger Ludeking, Chairman of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE. Parliamentary and diplomatic representatives from OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation also addressed the Forum.

Isabel Pozuelo, Vice-President of the OSCE PA

Underlining the interdependence between the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners, Pozuelo reaffirmed the importance of dealing with the concerns affecting the Mediterranean region as a whole, including violent extremism.

Terrorism, she said, has heightened fears that the region, already geopolitically and economically unstable, will soon spiral out of control. According to Pozuelo, social stagnation and unemployment – particularly youth unemployment – provide a breeding ground for terrorism, which has even attracted people from across Europe. She also expressed concerns about racism and religious intolerance, which had increased following terror attacks in Paris and Copenhagen.

Recognizing that geopolitical changes, political transition, shifting alliances, and new players in the region continue to warrant the OSCE's attention, she stated that the Libya crisis in particular represents a major challenge for the international community. Pozuelo expressed concerns about the record numbers of migrants and asylum seekers who are embarking on the perilous journey to Europe and stressed the need for all OSCE participating States to share

the load in hosting migrants.

Pozuelo said that air strikes alone cannot defeat ISIS, urging participating States to support moderates in the region who are committed to the democratic process. She said that promoting a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should remain a priority for the OSCE, expressing her support for recognizing Palestine as a State and granting it OSCE Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation status.

Ambassador Rudiger Ludeking, Chairman of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

Amb. Ludeking stressed the need to bring the international community closer together in order to address today's complex challenges. In chairing the Contact Group, he stated that Germany will work towards strengthening dialogue and co-operation between OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners. He said that recent events demonstrate that the fight against extremism, radicalization and terrorism is a crucial challenge and, in this respect, he stressed the need to give extra relevance to the relationship with the Mediterranean Partners. Following the shootings in Paris and Copenhagen, Ludeking stated that freedom of expression would be addressed by the Contact Group with the assistance of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The Contact Group will also devote efforts to issues including migration, trafficking in human beings and energy security.

Representatives of OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia

Hachemi Djiar, Head of the Algerian Delegation to the OSCE PA, stressed the need to broaden the framework of analysis of the Mediterranean geopolitical space to include the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, Iran and the Sahel. Noting that violent extremism has aggravated the instability of this region, Djiar said that a successful strategy must include cutting off sources of financing for



Mediterranean Forum

terrorist organizations. He underlined Algeria's role on the frontline of the fight against terrorism, and urged participating States to increase efforts for a viable solution to the conflicts in Israel-Palestine, Mali, Libya and the Sahel region as a whole. He also mentioned water as a major source of tension in the eastern Mediterranean.

Amb. Khaled Shamaa, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the OSCE, condemned the beheadings of 21 Christian Egyptians in Libya. He described terrorism as the biggest challenge to the region and stressed the need for enhancing co-operation between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

David Tsur, Head of the Israeli Delegation, expressed concern about the security situation in the Middle East and the recent attacks against Jewish communities in Copenhagen, Paris, Brussels and Toulouse. He stated that extremism in Europe deserves attention, which he stressed does not necessarily imply that this concern is motivated by Islamophobia. Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he affirmed that the majority of the Israeli Knesset favours a two-state solution, but that any further steps would depend on the results of the election in Israel on 17 March 2015. The reconstruction of Gaza remains an Israeli concern, but Tsur stressed the need for a transparent process to guarantee that the funds allocated are not used to finance terrorism.

Head of the Moroccan Delegation Abed Chkail underlined Morocco's readiness to pursue dialogue with other countries in the Mediterranean region, and stressed the need to involve all international players in this process. Recognizing the multi-dimensional character of

current challenges to the security and the development of the region, he warned of the risks of new cycles of violence. Chkail also referenced Morocco's initiatives and contribution to stabilizing the region as a whole, and its support for comprehensive approaches to security.

Amb. Ghazi Jomaa, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the OSCE, highlighted the changes experienced by his country in terms of democratic transition and development. He argued that while bilateral co-operation is improving, dialogue and co-operation at a multilateral level between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean are lacking and need to be improved. In closing, he stated that challenges to security and stability in the area and efforts to combat terrorism call for a coordinated and multi-dimensional response.

Debate

In the debate, OSCE parliamentarians highlighted the relevance of the OSCE PA's Mediterranean Forum in providing opportunities for improving interaction and dialogue between the OSCE area and the Mediterranean region as a whole. Discussing the promotion of security and co-operation in the region, parliamentarians raised various issues related to migration, the Islamic State and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More joint efforts were urged to face the humanitarian crisis in Syria. The new EU policy "Operation Triton" towards refugees and asylum seekers trying to reach Europe was touched upon, with members stressing the need for an efficient new approach to migration management.

Parliamentarians agreed that the spread of terrorism – particularly with the rise of the Islamic State – represents a major risk to security in the Mediterranean region and the entire OSCE area. In this regard, it was mentioned that the OSCE as a regional security organization has an important role to play in strengthening dialogue, promoting democracy and supporting the moderate political actors who demonstrate a commitment to a peaceful political process.



The 2015 OSCE PA Mediterranean Forum marked the first time the event has been held in conjunction with a Winter Meeting.



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 featured addresses by OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen, as well as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia Ivica Dacic. The upcoming 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act was one of the main topics discussed at the opening plenary, as well as the Ukraine crisis.

Christine Muttonen, Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Christine Muttonen, OSCE PA Vice-President and Deputy Head of the Austrian Delegation to the Assembly, addressed the Winter Meeting on behalf of the President of the National Council of Austria Doris Bures. She deplored the recent terror attacks in Paris and Copenhagen, emphasizing that they were an assault on shared values of pluralism and openness. All forms of hatred and terror must be countered, she said, and intercultural dialogue should take place on the basis of mutual respect.

Characterizing the situation in Ukraine as “deeply worrying,” Muttonen underscored the central role of the OSCE in addressing the ongoing crisis as the most well-suited organization to bring together all sides. She called for strict compliance with the ceasefire that went into effect on 15 February 2015.

The Parliamentary Assembly is contributing to democratic development in the OSCE area

through carrying out election observation missions in co-operation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Muttonen said, bringing unique experience and perspective as elected politicians.

The OSCE is adapting to the requirements of the 21st century, she said, an adaptation that can be further pursued within the Helsinki +40 process. Muttonen also marked the essential role of women in ensuring freedom, security and development, which, according to Muttonen, cannot be achieved without the participation of women.

Muttonen concluded by expressing support for the priorities of the Serbian Chairmanship and noted that Austria is preparing to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2017.

Ilkka Kanerva, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE PA Winter Meeting is a valued tradition of the Assembly, President Kanerva said in his opening remarks, reminding fellow parliamentarians that they “represent the collective voice of one billion people across the OSCE area.”

Speaking about the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine, Kanerva stressed that the internationally brokered plan to end the conflict must not be derailed. He welcomed the readiness of the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship to provide mediation with the full utilization of available tools and reaffirmed OSCE PA’s determination

Opening Joint Session of the General Committees

to contribute to the peace process. The President also asked parliamentarians and officials to consider whether an international peace keeping mission in eastern Ukraine could complement the OSCE's work, helping to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground, as well as to safeguard OSCE personnel.

With the shootings in Paris and Copenhagen offering reminders of ongoing threats to security posed by violent extremism, Kanerva called for redoubling efforts to improve counterterrorism strategies – for example, by better intelligence-sharing, making border controls more effective and combating extremism on the internet.

Kanerva pointed out that the Parliamentary Assembly, which since September 2014 has been conducting its Helsinki +40 Project with seminars in various capitals, will commemorate the upcoming 40th anniversary of the OSCE's founding document during the Annual Session in July 2015. "I hope that we can rekindle the spirit of co-operation that has guided our work since 1975 and provided the basis for real progress in the three dimensions of security as outlined in the Helsinki Final Act," he said.

Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia

In his first address to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as Chairperson-in-Office, Minister Dacic stressed the importance of 2015 as the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Acknowledging that "much has changed since 1975," Dacic underscored that today the principles and legacy of the Helsinki Final Act are "more relevant than ever."

Dacic urged all sides to fully adhere to the Minsk agreements, respect the ceasefire and co-operate with the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. "Another opportunity for a peaceful resolution of the conflict should not be missed," he said. He reassured the OSCE PA that restoration of peace and stability in Ukraine is the "main priority" of the Serbian Chairmanship, which will "continue to act as an honest broker in this process," he said.

Noting that all participating States, as well as



all OSCE Institutions and structures, are jointly responsible for creating conditions for dialogue and compromise, Dacic commended the PA's efforts in this field. In particular, he welcomed the establishment of the PA's Interparliamentary Liaison Group, which aims to promote dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian parliamentarians, and the Assembly's role in monitoring elections in Ukraine in 2014. To advance the resolution of protracted conflicts in the OSCE area, "additional efforts to generate the necessary political will" are required, he added.

The Minister outlined the priorities of the Serbian Chairmanship in all three dimensions of OSCE activity, and noted that their successful implementation will require a cross-dimensional and inclusive approach. "In this sense, the Parliamentary Assembly could play a very important role, providing new ideas and proposals to develop joint activities," he said.

Minister Dacic reminded the parliamentarians not to "lose sight of a broader strategic outlook on European security" amid the intense efforts to resolve the ongoing Ukrainian crisis and pointed out the importance of upholding common values and principles.

Question & Answer

The Chairperson-in-Office took questions from OSCE PA members on the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship's priorities for 2015, as well as on a range of topical issues, including protracted conflicts, gender equality, and trafficking in human beings.

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



First Committee Vice-Chair Azay Guliyev (MP, Azerbaijan) opened the session noting that violent extremism and the conflict in Ukraine continue to threaten security and stability in the OSCE area. He underlined the importance of protecting national minorities and pointed out the necessity of participating States co-operating to the fullest extent possible to address these challenges.

**Pia Kauma,
Rapporteur of the First Committee**

Presenting her ideas for the 24th Annual Session in Helsinki, Committee Rapporteur Pia Kauma (MP, Finland) noted that the OSCE is now facing the worst crisis of European security since the end of the Cold War, arguing that the most pressing security challenges facing the Organization are the fight against terrorism and the Ukraine crisis. Preventing the conflict from spilling over beyond Ukraine's borders or becoming a new protracted conflict is a clear priority, Kauma stated. She also said that all sides must respect the ceasefire agreement and withdraw heavy weaponry from the frontlines, while engagement with all sides is pursued. No one should be isolated or left out of the diplomatic process, she said.

Kauma noted that the instability in North Africa and the Middle East is having a growing impact on security in the OSCE region. She condemned the attacks in Copenhagen and Paris and recent atrocities by ISIS, urging a rapid response from the international community to counter these troubling trends. She also discussed possible initiatives to be taken in order to combat extremism, including integration of



immigrants and a better organization of the prison system to avoid the spread of extremist ideology among inmates. Finally, noting the OSCE's important contribution to Europe's military security through the negotiation of ground-breaking agreements on arms control and by managing security crises in recent decades, she called on participating States to forge a stronger common political will.

**Ambassador Cristian Istrate,
Chairperson of the Security
Committee of the OSCE
Permanent Council**

Amb. Istrate (Romania) highlighted the need for the OSCE to remain true to its values and fundamental principles in countering terrorism. He presented the Security Committee's activities and ongoing discussions on finding new and innovative solutions to the challenges posed by violent extremism. He stated that the Security Committee will give considerable attention to terrorism, preventing youth radicalization, co-operation among international actors, cyber security capacity-building, multi-ethnic policing, trafficking in human beings, and security sector reform and governance, among other issues. Welcoming the focus that the OSCE PA paid to transnational threats at the Baku Annual Session, Istrate noted that he appreciates input from parliamentarians and highlighted the importance of involving autonomous institutions and field presences in the discussion on transnational threats. Finally, he talked about the need to create synergies and enhance co-operation without duplicating the efforts of other international institutions.

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Astrid Thors (Finland) recalled the OSCE PA's Baku Declaration which urged participating States to establish appropriate legal frameworks to combat and prevent intolerance, racism and xenophobia. She identified aggressive nationalism as one of the main concerns for the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), as it leads to discrimination towards national minorities, which can in turn lead to marginalization, societal instability and conflict. The second serious concern for the HCNM is the growing tendency of "kin-state activism," she said.

Thors emphasized the role the HCNM plays in dealing with minorities' issues in intra-state relations. She reminded members that 2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the Copenhagen Document, which introduced far-reaching provisions regarding national minorities' protection. Finally, she discussed the crisis in Ukraine, stating that the HCNM stands ready to support the country in the reform process if needed. Thors also expressed deep concern about the situation of Tatars and Ukrainians living in Crimea.

**Alexey Lyzhenkov,
OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to
address transnational threats**

Alexey Lyzhenkov (Russian Federation) spoke about the OSCE's role in countering terrorism, underlining that transnational threats to security, in particular violent extremism, have continued to evolve, and that the only way

to effectively confront them is to strengthen counter-terrorism co-operation at all levels. Lyzhenkov also discussed the important role the OSCE plays in addressing terrorism, providing a unique platform for dialogue among counter-terrorism policy experts and practitioners, which is essential to foster co-operation. He went on to discuss some of the OSCE-wide, sub-regional and national activities to counter terrorism. Finally, he discussed the role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in supporting and actively promoting the implementation of OSCE counter-terrorism commitments, in encouraging co-operation and co-ordination both within and between States.

Lyzhenkov stressed that "parliamentarians have a particularly crucial role to play in promoting the international legal framework against terrorism." In this regard, he argued that counter-terrorism capacity across the OSCE area would be considerably strengthened if members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly leveraged their influence within their countries to advocate for all OSCE participating States to become parties to international counter-terrorism instruments.

Debate

During the debate, OSCE parliamentarians raised various issues related to the OSCE area's vulnerability to terrorist attacks, particularly from citizens who have traveled to fight in conflict zones such as Syria, and called for strengthening preventive measures in this regard. Members agreed that the spread of terrorism represents a significant risk to security in the OSCE area and underlined the relevance of the Organization in preventing terrorist attacks and countering violent extremism in all its forms. Some members stressed the need to ensure better co-ordination and to strengthen coherence and more efficient use of the Organization's resources in addressing transnational threats.

Countering the use of the internet for terrorist activity was stressed, while some members urged participating States to enhance joint efforts to tackle terrorist threats within Europe, while respecting human rights obligations. The need for closer relations with the countries of the Middle East and North Africa was also discussed.

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

Roza Aknazarova, Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, opened the meeting on 19 February by introducing the agenda and the speakers, and handed the floor to Committee Rapporteur Marietta Tidei, to present her ideas for the report and draft resolution to be debated by the committee at the Annual Session in Helsinki.

Marietta Tidei, Rapporteur of the Second Committee

Marietta Tidei noted that since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, concrete results have been achieved in the economic field of OSCE activity despite the fact that it has often received marginal attention in comparison to the politico-military and human rights dimensions of the OSCE. She presented several key topics to be discussed in her report, which focused primarily on food and water security, energy security, climate change and economic co-operation.

Tidei argued that informed political choices, sustainable lifestyles and balance between the availability and the consumption of resources are necessary to ensure food and water security. She pointed out that adequate nutrition and secure access to water are fundamental human rights. Speaking about energy security, Tidei emphasized the need to reduce imbalances between energy-producing and energy-consuming countries and identified four critical aspects that require co-operation, namely energy supply and related issues at the political level, efficient energy resource distribution, diversification of energy sources and energy saving.



Finally, Tidei called for enhanced economic co-operation among OSCE participating States that would be in compliance with the spirit of Helsinki. She also noted the need for greater co-operation with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners, especially in the field of migration management.

Tomislav Leko, Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee

Amb. Tomislav Leko presented the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee (EEC) Work Plan for 2015, briefly introducing six upcoming thematic EEC meetings, which will focus on the issues of migration, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering, disaster risk reduction, energy security, transport, and climate change in the OSCE context. He emphasized that the EEC aims to bring the perspective of the OSCE field operations into its discussions and to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach in its activities and programmes.

The Ambassador advised that, in accordance with the Ministerial Council Decision 5/14, the Committee is currently preparing a report that will outline options for strengthening OSCE capacity on combating and preventing corruption. Leko also announced that the theme of the 2015 Economic and Environmental Forum is water governance in the OSCE area. "This issue remains very topical and critical as water is becoming increasingly an essential element of national and regional security," he said.

Leko concluded by expressing confidence that "further utilization of economic and environmental dimension could substantially contribute to the overall security in the OSCE area."

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

Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden outlined the thematic priorities of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) for the year 2015. The main activities, he said, include combating corruption and money laundering, capacity-building and exchange of best practices in the

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

area of transport, trade and customs, and labour migration management. Speaking about environmental activities of the Office, he focused on water management, disaster risk reduction, climate change and problems of hazardous waste and substances, emphasizing that strengthening civil society and good governance remains at the core of the OCEEA's efforts in this field. He noted that another important pillar of his Office's work is access to justice.

"All these activities require effective partnerships, be it at the national level among government agencies, civil society and parliaments at the regional level among countries; or at the international level among different international actors," Yigitguden said. He emphasized the OCEEA's engagement with the Mediterranean Partners for Co operation, especially in the area of sharing good practices and experience.

Special Debate – Co-operation in enhancing energy security and reducing environmental and economic challenges in the OSCE area

Opening the Second Committee's Special Debate, Committee Chair Roza Aknazarova pointed out that "the topic of energy security goes to the heart of the modern state's need to balance its independence and duty to protect its citizens, on the one hand, and its interdependence and international obligations, on the other." She presented an overview of the Kyrgyz energy sector focusing in particular on its hydropower system. Aknazarova then invited delegates to exchange ideas on the role that the OSCE can play in enhancing energy security, as well as in reducing the environmental and economic challenges across the OSCE region.

Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden reaffirmed that "energy security and reducing environmental and economic challenges in the OSCE area requires increasing co-operation between participating States." He pointed out that energy issues, albeit a potential source of tension, can offer opportunities for joint action. He expressed concern about the fact that extrac-



Roza Aknazarova and Nilza Sena

tion, processing and transportation of energy resources contribute to climate change, which has become a real threat for countries on all continents. In this respect, the need for developing renewable energy sources is even more pronounced, he said, and presented an overview of the OSCE activities in this field.

In his presentation, Janez Kopac, Director of the Energy Community Secretariat, emphasized the importance of international co-operation to ensure energy security through the analysis of the gas market in the Energy Community, an international organization established between the European Union and a number of its neighbouring countries. Kopac explained that the co-operative regulatory framework of the Energy Community and infrastructure projects of common interest reduce the risks of disruption for the Contracting Parties. He stated that an integrated energy market is also able to deliver economic growth, affordable energy, secure supply, sustainability of the resource use and lower prices.

Debate

The presentations of the keynote speakers were followed by a lively debate, with parliamentarians raising various issues related to energy security and other environmental and economic challenges. They generally agreed that one of the major challenges is to meet energy demand without compromising the environment and called for greater investment into research and development of renewable energy sources. The role of energy dependence in spurring regional conflicts and the need for diversification of routes and sources were also discussed.





General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Opening the meeting of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions on 19 February, Chair Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal) updated members on her recent activities, including her January visit to the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. Describing the facility as “a black mark on our collective history,” Santos presented a report calling on participating States to push for its closure.

She described her ongoing dialogue with several countries related to human rights concerns and discussed her efforts to visit imprisoned human rights defenders. She further highlighted the plight of refugees, describing her personal visit to a camp on the Syria-Turkey border, and called for increased commitment to alleviating this humanitarian crisis.

Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media

OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media Dunja Mijatovic noted worrying trends in freedom of expression and media independence over the previous year, pointing out that since the 2014 Winter Meeting, at least 170 journalists had been assaulted and approximately 30 media premises attacked across the OSCE area. Mijatovic noted the threat to independent media posed by – but not limited to – government institutions at the local, regional and national levels, and warned against the “uncontrolled proliferation of propaganda” on the initiative of such bodies.

Mijatovic reminded participating States of

their responsibility to honour OSCE values both in principle and in practice. She urged members to promote consistently safe working environments for journalists and to pursue the prosecution of violent acts committed against them, particularly with regards to the well-being of female journalists, who often face more harassment and abuse than their male counterparts. Mijatovic also said that she does not question the legitimate right of governments to fight terrorism, but stressed that counter-terrorism measures “should never be misused to silence provocative or opposing voices in a society.” In her view, “we need to accept being shocked, disturbed or even offended by what is said or written” as the price of living in open democracies with free media.

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

Addressing the PA for the first time as Director of the OSCE/ODIHR, Link argued that due to being “interpreted in different ways in different places,” human rights are increasingly under threat in the OSCE area. He explained that the defence of human dimension commitments is part of ODIHR’s broad remit, encompassing the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, scrutiny of national legislation and election observation missions. He thanked members for their co-operation during recent elections in Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Moldova, stressing the complementary roles of ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly in these endeavours.

In addition to ODIHR’s established activities in the area of religious freedom, Link informed the Assembly that the office would also begin to monitor the rights of Christians in the OSCE region, as well as keeping a close eye on the human rights situation in Crimea.

Ambassador Robert Kvile, Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council

Amb. Kvile outlined the priorities of the

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Human Dimension Committee for 2015, which include freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion and belief, national minorities and trafficking in human beings. These will be addressed in the committee by OSCE and United Nations officials, as well as other experts representing all three dimensions of security, at meetings and working groups to be held throughout the year, Kvile said.

The Ambassador warned against limiting discussion only to issues where consensus exists, arguing that he “see[s] great merit in discussing issues where there is no consensus” and that “the committee has an important role to play for laying the ground for new commitments.” He further expressed his ambition for the committee to serve as a forum for the exchange of best practices, seeing its work as a vital means of ensuring the implementation of its recommendations in the form of legislation.

Ambassador Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration

In assessing the national and international legal framework for the protection of migrants, Amb. Thompson acknowledged that States have the right to determine the terms by which migrants can enter their territory, but asserted that “human rights do not end where borders begin.” She argued for the legalization, not criminalization, of the migration process.

She noted that public debates about migrants are often reduced to statistical analysis. This too often overlooks the status of migrants as individuals, and the Ambassador encouraged PA members, as influential voices and opinion-makers in their respective countries, to ensure that such discussions develop into fact-based exchanges which take human considerations into account.

Mustapha Dzemiliev, former Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars

Mustapha Dzemiliev, a former Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars and member of the Ukrainian Parliament, decried what he

described as “the ongoing Russian occupation” of the Crimean peninsula. Dzemiliev stressed that thousands of his people have fled to mainland Ukraine in response to Russian attempts to restrict their political and linguistic autonomy. Having now been exiled from his home region for the second time in his life, Dzemiliev described the serious impact of Russian-imposed military conscription and food shortages on the day-to-day life of Tatars who have remained in Crimea, and called for the OSCE and the broader international community to focus their efforts towards bringing the peninsula back under Ukrainian sovereignty.

Dr. Saad Fandi

Saad Fandi, a Syrian national who fled the fighting in his country in 2014 and now resides in Germany, described the effects of the ongoing civil war in his country and discussed how to solve the crisis. Dr. Fandi expressed hope that his homeland would one day be “a free country” and that he would be able to return. He argued that the Syrian people are suffering as a result of their government’s desire to remain in power, and that the international community should do more to encourage its removal, enabling exiles such as himself to return. He also stated that the turmoil of the past three years has caused “all Syrians to dream of leaving their home country to obtain a visa from a civilized nation.”

Debate

In addressing the topics raised by panelists, parliamentarians discussed issues such as how to ensure safe and legal passage for legal migrants seeking to reach Europe, particularly in light of increased trafficking and smuggling across the Mediterranean region.

Regarding Dr. Fandi’s remarks on Syria, several delegates urged the OSCE to do more to address the effects of the civil war, including the resulting refugee crisis. Members also exchanged views on the crisis in and around Ukraine, urging both sides to stick to the terms of the Minsk agreement and for OSCE institutions to play a greater role in creating the conditions for peace.





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, Autumn Meeting and Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget and elects the Secretary General.

President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) opened the Standing Committee meeting on 20 February with a report on his activities since being elected at the 2014 Annual Session in Baku. He spoke about recent meetings he held with Russian State Duma Chair Sergey Naryshkin and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, in which Kanerva called on all parties to respect the terms of the Ukraine ceasefire agreement. The President also reported on his visit to the Harran refugee camp on the Turkey-Syria border, accompanied by OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver and Third Committee Chair Isabel Santos (MP, Portugal), where he saw first-hand the effects of population displacement resulting from the Syrian civil war.

Speaking on behalf of OSCE PA Treasurer Roberto Battelli (MP, Slovenia), Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares informed members that the PA continues to function in a cost-effective manner. Pallares reported that Battelli would be meeting with the Assembly's external auditor on the sidelines of the April Bureau meeting in Copenhagen. He extended gratitude on behalf of the Assembly to Germany and Turkey for providing voluntary financial contributions to the work of the Secretariat, as well as to Denmark and Austria for their long-standing financial and logistical assistance in providing the PA offices. Pallares also thanked participating States who have hosted PA events, and urged delegations that have not yet done so to consider hosting meetings in the future.

Secretary General Spencer Oliver echoed Pallares' gratitude to the Danish and Austrian parliaments, and appealed for further voluntary contributions to sustain the work of the International Secretariat. The Secretary General noted that despite an increasing number of events and commitments, the OSCE PA has remained within its budget for its entire 22 years. He referenced the Standing Committee's October 2014 meeting in Geneva, as well as the PA's efforts

to advance the OSCE's Helsinki +40 process through a series of seminars bringing together representatives of civil society, academia and other experts. In addition, Oliver previewed the 2015 Helsinki Annual Session, to be held in historic Finlandia Hall on 5-9 July 2015.

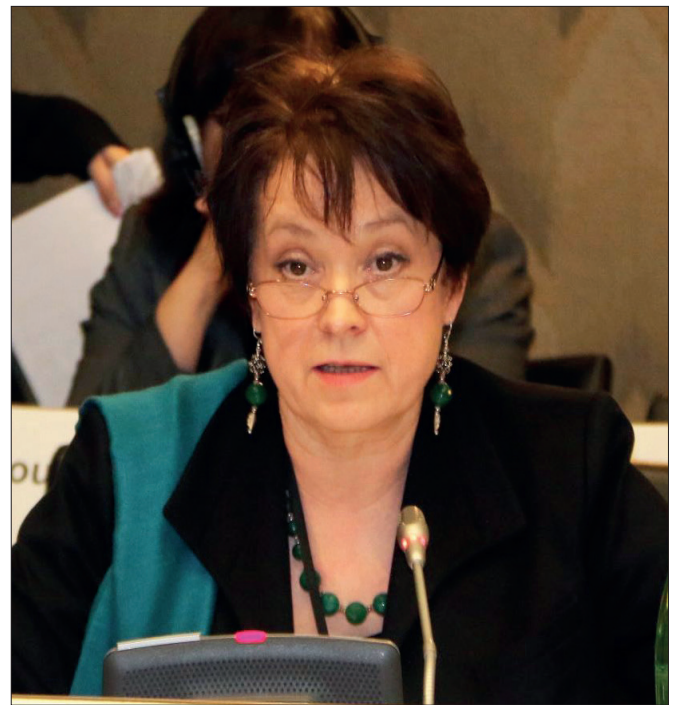
Oliver informed members that he had not yet made a decision as to whether he would run for another five-year term as Secretary General, but assured them that he would formally communicate his decision at the end of the month. Several delegations, including the United Kingdom, Germany and Turkey, praised the Secretary General for his longstanding service to the OSCE PA.

On the initiative of Lord Peter Bowness (UK), members proceeded to discuss and vote on a proposed amendment to further clarify the PA's Rules of Procedure. Due to objections from five members, the amendment failed to pass.

Leaders of recent election observation missions presented their findings and President Kanerva announced his decision to dispatch an election observation mission to the March 2015 parliamentary elections in Tajikistan. Helsinki +40 Project Chair Joao Soares (MP, Portugal) gave members further details of the Helsinki +40 seminars and Serbia announced that it would be hosting a seminar in 2015 focusing on the future of the OSCE's field missions.

Special Representative on Border Issues Ignacio Sanchez Amor briefed members on a recent visit to the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, while Special Representative for Afghanistan Michel Voisin spoke about his visit to the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Terrorism Nikolay Kovalev also offered details of relevant activity undertaken in that capacity.

Migeddorj Batchimeg, Head of the Mongolian Delegation, said she looked forward to hosting members at the 2015 OSCE PA Fall Meeting in Ulaanbaatar.



Closing Joint Session of the General Committees

Chaired by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva, the closing joint session of the three General Committees consisted of reports by OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre Amb. Adam Kobieracki, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine Amb. Ertugrul Apakan and Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine Amb. Heidi Tagliavini. The joint session closed with a debate on “The OSCE’s Response to the Crisis in and Around Ukraine.”

Hedy Fry, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues



Hedy Fry

Hedy Fry (MP, Canada) pointed out two measures related to gender issues that were adopted by the Ministerial Council in Basel in December 2014: the Decision on an Addendum to the 2004 Gender Action Plan and

the Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women. While addressing the latter, Fry regretted that some States attempted to restrict the scope of the resolution or to weaken commitments related to the promotion and achievement of gender equality.

On a positive note, Fry said that during the negotiations, the participating States considered ways in which the Parliamentary Assembly could contribute to the OSCE’s efforts to strengthen women’s political participation. Fry also shared the second point of interest during the negotiations: a proposal to create a new, integrated gender equality structure within the OSCE Secretariat that would aim to raise the profile of gender issues to the political level.



Some 200 parliamentarians gathered for the closing joint session of the three General Committees on 20 February 2015.

Ilkka Kanerva, OSCE PA President



Ilkka Kanerva

In introducing the debate on Ukraine, President Kanerva regretted that there had already been ceasefire violations in the country, particularly in and around the city of Debaltseve. Despite these setbacks, it is essential that Ukraine and

the international community continue working towards peace and stability, he stressed. “As lawmakers from the OSCE’s 57 States we must be vocal and unequivocal in furthering the goal of peace in and around Ukraine,” he said. “With every rocket launched, hope for a diplomatic solution grows dimmer.”

Kanerva also asked parliamentarians to consider both within the Assembly and in their home parliaments the idea of an international peacekeeping mission in eastern Ukraine, which could complement the OSCE’s current work on the ground, he said.

Adam Kobieracki, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre

As the acting head of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), Amb. Kobieracki expressed appreciation for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s strong support for the SMM and statements issued by the PA

Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



Adam Kobieracki

regarding Ukraine. He recalled that predictability and foreign policy will continue to be serious challenges in 2015, emphasizing that the Ukraine conflict is a symptom of a larger security crisis that has been emerging over the years with-

out being fully recognized.

Kobieracki conceded that while the OSCE will continue its determined efforts to support a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, there remains “the absence of an essential catalyst – political will.” The Ambassador stressed that progress on the political level is essential but that the immediate priority is to stop the fighting. He emphasized the importance of dialogue at the local, regional and national levels which could facilitate reconciliation and national cohesion in Ukraine. With its wide-ranging toolbox, the OSCE is well-placed and ready to promote such processes in Ukraine, he said.

Ertugrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Amb. Apakan urged all parties to the conflict to recognize that commitments to peace agreed in the Belarusian capital are not open to interpretation. “This is a Minsk process. There is no differentiation – ‘this Minsk process’ and ‘that Minsk process.’ Minsk is one,” he said.



Ertugrul Apakan

Apakan explained that the SMM has ten teams in Ukraine and their basic function is to monitor and verify human rights, minority rights and fundamental freedoms, while also promoting dialogue and facilitation. He pointed out that as many as 6,000 people have tragically lost their lives due to the conflict, while nearly

15,000 people have been wounded and an estimated million Ukrainians have been displaced. He noted that nearly 60 per cent of refugees and internally displaced persons were women, 30 per cent were children and a large number were elderly. Most Ukrainians who have left the country have fled to Russia, Belarus, Poland, Moldova and Hungary, he pointed out.

Apakan said that the SMM has maintained communications with the Russian-Ukrainian Joint Control and Co-ordination Center, the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People’s Republic in order to ensure contact with the Donbas region but regretted that the DPR has denied their access. He emphasized that promoting respect for the ceasefire as well as the withdrawal of heavy weapons are the immediate priorities for peacebuilding in Ukraine.

Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine



Heidi Tagliavini

Amb. Tagliavini described the Ukraine conflict as a human tragedy in which widespread destruction has led to a crisis of refugees and displaced persons, and of broken homes and shattered dreams. She stated that every day of the conflict is

one of uncertainty, and said that it is imperative for the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly to continue working towards a long-term solution to the crisis.

“There is not a single day in the Ukrainian conflict when we can feel sure what the next day will bring us,” she said. “There is, even, the frequent fear that the situation in eastern Ukraine may completely get out of hand.”

She said that the conflict may fundamentally endanger the foundations of security and co-operation in Europe initiated in Helsinki 40 years ago and which gave the Organization its name. She suggested that the full implementation of the Minsk agreement is needed in order to end the crisis.

Closing Joint Session of the General Committees



Ihor Popov of the Ukrainian Delegation participates in the Special Debate.

Special Debate: The OSCE's Response to the Crisis in and Around Ukraine

In the debate, parliamentarians discussed various aspects of the crisis, and urged for steps to be taken toward restoring long-term stability in the country. Several members from countries including Ukraine, Russia, France, The Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Serbia, Latvia, Spain, Switzerland and Albania called for the active engagement of the OSCE and other international organizations to increase efforts in facilitating peace and reconciliation.

Some focused on the urgent need to immediately end the violence, while others emphasized the importance of accepting the legitimate, internationally recognized borders of Ukraine. The Kyiv government, it was stressed, must be given the chance to build a democratic independent state that will have good relations with its neighbours and all countries on the continent. MPs also emphasized the important role that the SMM plays on the ground.

Artur Gerasymov, the Head of the Ukrainian Delegation, asked whether the Russian Federation is sincerely interested in sustaining a ceasefire and withdrawing heavy weapons, as called for in the Minsk agreement. "So far that is not apparent," he said. Alexey Pushkov of the Russian Delegation responded by insisting that Russia cannot be the only country held responsible for the implementation of the Minsk agreement and lamented that "trust has been one of the main victims of the crisis in Ukraine."

Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu (MP, Romania) warned against the potential for a "frozen conflict" in Ukraine and urged the extension and expansion of the OSCE Observer Mission at

the Ukrainian-Russian border. OSCE PA Vice-President Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene (MP, Lithuania) urged OSCE participating States to consider the ramifications of Russia's actions on the OSCE's founding document and fundamental principles. "It is ironic that to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Helsinki Final Act, the Kremlin has sent us a bloody invitation to its funeral," she said.

Ignacio Sanchez Amor, the Deputy Head of the Spanish Delegation, urged the Assembly to utilize the potential of the PA to foster dialogue between participating States, even during moments of sharp disagreement.

Andreas Aebi, Head of the Swiss Delegation, called for participating States to support increased resources and personnel for the SMM as it facilitates the Minsk package.

In his concluding statement, President Kanerva stressed that the crisis in Ukraine is not a question only about Ukraine but a question about a larger crisis in the European security architecture and the relations between East and West. He emphasized political dialogue and diplomatic solutions as the key tools to solve the crisis. In closing, President Kanerva expressed his hope for continuing the process of peace-building in Ukraine in a positive way.



Alexey Pushkov of the Russian Delegation





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 19, including four staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Deputy Secretary
General
Semyon Dzakhayev



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



Conference
Co-ordinator
Odile LeLarge



Administrative
Director
Kurt Lerras



Director of Presidential
Administration
Roberto Montella



Senior Policy
Analyst
Francesco Pagani



Editorial Director
Nat Parry



IT Specialist
Stephen Paul



Programme Officer
Loic Poulain



Office Admin Man-
ager / Webmaster
Pia Rasmussen



Operations Officer
Iryna Sabashuk



Communications
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.



OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

International Secretariat of the OSCE PA

Tordenskjoldsgade 1

1055 Copenhagen K

Denmark

Tel: +45 33 37 80 40

Fax: +45 33 37 80 30

international.secretariat@oscepa.dk

www.oscepa.org