As the inter-parliamentary forum of the largest regional security organization in the world, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA) serves 323 members from 57 participating States in their multilateral efforts to promote lasting security for over a billion citizens across three continents. The present overview is the result of an OSCE PA initiative to map the OSCE participating States' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Global trends**

The number of States having reported more than 10,000 COVID-19 related deaths, accounting for the vast majority (97%) of victims in the OSCE region, has increased by approx. 2% in the last two weeks.

8 of these States have surpassed the 100,000 threshold during the past two weeks, only 6 of which have reported more than 200,000 COVID-19 related deaths, accounting for 97% of the overall victims in the OSCE region.

In the 24 States, the total number of infections in these States has grown by approx. 137% (+10 States) and by 103% (+4 States) in the past two weeks, respectively.

Infections in the OSCE area have increased by approx. 97% in the first two weeks (+76 States) and by 103% (+103 States) in the second.

IN FOCUS: PARLIAMENTARY FUNCTIONING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Parliament has risen to the challenge posed by COVID-19 in different manners. While some 25 States have implemented new measures to enable parliament to continue functioning during the pandemic, others have conducted their sessions in two separate rooms. As a result, some votes are cast electronically and the rest are counted manually.

In 20 of 34 OSCE countries, parliaments have transferred their sessions to the Upper House Chamber, which has a seating capacity of 453, where they sit in a ‘chessboard’ arrangement that ensures that one seat is empty around each Member in all directions, and follow strict protective health measures during their work.

Some parliaments have made physical adjustments that create more personal space in order to facilitate voting. Parliamentarians have rearranged their desks to accommodate functioning during the pandemic. In 16 OSCE countries, parliaments have implemented social distancing measures during their work. In 13 OSCE countries, parliaments have transferred their sessions to the Upper House Chamber, where they sit in a ‘chessboard’ arrangement that ensures that one seat is empty around each Member in all directions, and follow strict protective health measures.

Other approaches have included: parliamentarians sitting on chairs that are at least 6 feet apart; parliamentarians voting electronically through the use of tablets where an activation code is sent via SMS text message; parliamentarians voting electronically through the use of tablets where an activation code is sent via SMS text message; parliamentarians voting electronically through the use of tablets where an activation code is sent via SMS text message; parliamentarians voting electronically through the use of tablets where an activation code is sent via SMS text message; parliamentarians voting electronically through the use of tablets where an activation code is sent via SMS text message.

Parliaments have introduced social distancing measures between meetings. Otherwise almost all of the parliamentarians make use of plastic shields, masks, and face coverings. Parliamentarians have implemented social distancing measures, more than half (20 States) have implemented this for committee work.

Parliamentarians have moved to the challenge posed by COVID-19. In 16 of 34 OSCE countries parliaments have adopted special legislation directly related to COVID-19. Parliamentarians in 12 of 34 OSCE countries have been asked to report a health certificate, including some of the States that have not reported special legislation directly related to COVID-19. To get access to the voting system, an additional authentication procedure is used where an activation code is sent via SMS text message. To gain access to the voting system, an additional authentication procedure is used where an activation code is sent via SMS text message.

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