

Ukraine, migration, counter-terrorism in focus at plenary session



President Margareta Cederfelt chairs the plenary session on 5 July.

Tuesday's plenary session featured reports on priority issues for the PA, including migration, counter-terrorism, corruption, climate change, human trafficking, civil society engagement, digitalization, youth engagement, the Arctic, South East Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia.

In his report, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) highlighted a questionnaire that had been circulated to all PA delegations to gather data on measures taken to welcome refugees from Ukraine, to

highlight achievements as well as areas for development. He encouraged OSCE participating States to apply effective practices developed in this context to asylum and refugee management procedures more generally.

On behalf of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, Vice-Chair Kamil Aydin (Türkiye) reported on the CCT's efforts to promote peace and stability through increased parliamentary engagement on counter-terrorism issues. He highlighted several areas of concern that require urgent attention, including the possible exploitation by terrorist groups of the social, political, and economic repercussions of the war in Ukraine, as well as other concerns such as developments in Afghanistan and the Sahel region.

The reports of the ad hoc committees were followed by reports on other OSCE PA activities, including the work of the Special Representatives, as well as an active discussion on early voting procedures within the Assembly.

General Committees complete work and elect leaders for 2022-2023



Voting in the First Committee, 5 July

The First Committee on Tuesday continued its work on the supplementary item principally sponsored by Bryndís Haraldsdóttir (Iceland), adopting it as amended with overwhelming support. The supplementary item Effective Youth Engagement Towards Secure, Inclusive and Democratic Societies, principally sponsored by Farah Karimi, was adopted with one amendment.

The Second Committee resumed work on the supplementary item Accelerating the Green Energy Transition, principally sponsored by John Aldag (Canada).

The resolution took on three amendments and was adopted by a vote of 54-2 with one abstention.

The Third Committee took up work on the supplementary item Ensuring the Safety of Journalists in Conflict Zones, principally sponsored by John Whittingdale (United Kingdom). The resolution was adopted with overwhelming support, followed by a moment of silence in memory of journalists who lost their lives covering conflicts.

The committees also elected leadership for the coming year. In the First Committee, Richard Hudson (United States) was re-elected Chair, Costel Neculai Dunava (Romania) Vice-Chair, and Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) Rapporteur. In the Second Committee, Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) was elected Chair, with Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) and Gudrun Kugler (Austria) re-elected Vice-Chair and Rapporteur, respectively. The Third Committee elected Nikoloz Samkharadze (Georgia) Chair, Farah Karimi (Netherlands) Vice-Chair, and Johan Buser (Sweden) Rapporteur.

Side events focus on civil liberties, youth, war and parliamentary integrity

Side events on Tuesday focused on issues such as youth in conflict zones and parliamentary integrity. In an event hosted by Steve Cohen (United States), members discussed protests and repression in Russia and Belarus, hearing presentations by Evgenia Kara-Murza, wife of jailed Russian opposition leader Vladimir Kara-Murza; Bill Browder, head of the Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign, Natalia Kaliada of the Belarus Free Theatre, and Gunnar Ekeløve-Slydal, Deputy Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. Participants at the event discussed the issue of political prisoners and how the OSCE and other actors can respond.

An event sponsored by OSCE PA Special Representative on Youth Engagement Farah Karimi (Netherlands), Marilou McPhedran (Canada) and Leah Gazan (Canada), focused on

the impact of war on young people, with expert testimony from Arezo Kohistany from the Yalda Hakim Foundation, Ukrainian parliamentarian Yevhania Kravchuk, and Natia Kostava from the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. OSCE CPC Director Tuula Yrjölä offered opening remarks.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights organized a side event focused on promoting a culture of integrity and accountability in national parliaments. Introduced by ODIHR expert Radivoje Grujic, OSCE PA Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) and Maria Karapetyan (Armenia), the event featured a discussion on the importance of developing user-friendly tools and good practices for parliaments to curb conflicts of interest, and deepening PA-ODIHR co-operation in this regard.