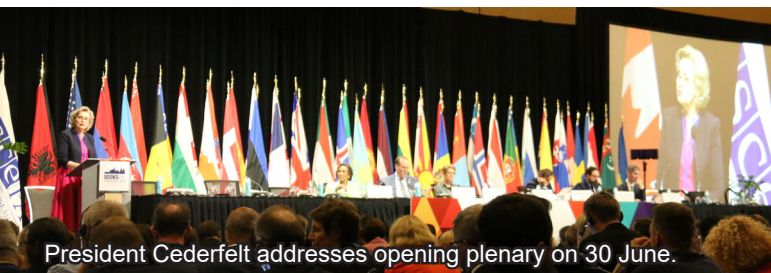


OSCE PA's 30th Annual Session opens in Vancouver



President Cederfelt addresses opening plenary on 30 June.

The OSCE PA's 30th Annual Session opened Friday with calls for strengthening the role of the OSCE in meeting current challenges, including by ending the war in Ukraine with full respect for the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In her opening speech, OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) stressed that the Assembly should help lead the way out of the precarious situation facing the world, and towards this end she announced that earlier in the day the heads of national OSCE PA delegations had established a new committee to more effectively co-ordinate support for Ukraine.

President Cederfelt also highlighted the need to remain vigilant elsewhere in the OSCE region, including in the

Western Balkans where growing tensions call for immediate attention, and in the South Caucasus, where the road to durable peace and reconciliation "remains long and difficult." Also addressing the opening session were Raymonde Gagné, Speaker of the Canadian Senate; Chris d'Entremont, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons; and Hedy Fry, who serves as Head of the OSCE PA's Canadian Delegation and Special Representative on Gender Issues. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addressed the plenary in a video message, welcoming participants to Canada and stressing the importance of delivering the message to the Russian Federation that might does not make right.

Dr. Fry welcomed the Assembly to Vancouver, her hometown, and expressed pride in the diversity of the city. She noted that what binds Canadians together are common values of democracy and peace, underlining that these values are what compel OSCE parliamentarians to continue advocating for Ukraine.

Following the opening speeches, the Assembly agreed to a resolution on the OSCE and the OSCE PA's credibility in the face of Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine, with one amendment.

Standing Committee creates Ukraine working group, allocates supplementary items



The Assembly's Standing Committee meeting on 30 June

The PA's Standing Committee on Friday unanimously approved a proposal to establish a new parliamentary working group devoted to addressing the Russian Federation's ongoing war in Ukraine. President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) said

that the objective of the ad hoc committee is to ensure that the war remains at the forefront of the PA's activities and that Ukraine's needs are well considered.

Following other Standing Committee decisions, 16 supplementary items will be placed on the agenda of the Annual Session, with three sent to the plenary, four to the First Committee, three to the Second Committee and six to the Third Committee. The resolutions on OSCE and OSCE PA credibility, gendered consequences of armed conflicts, and antisemitism were placed on the agenda of the plenary.

The First Committee will consider the supplementary

items on the Wagner Group, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and OSCE principles; future generations; and Moldova. The Second Committee will debate science diplomacy, microplastic and nanoplastic pollution, and a proposed performance audit of the PA. The Third Committee will consider supplementary items dealing with the deportation of Ukrainian children, democracy in Belarus, civil society, safeguarding Ukrainian women and children, human trafficking, and the desecration of Polish graves in Belarus.

Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen presented the Assembly's financial situation and the Standing Committee unanimously approved the budget for fiscal year 2023/2024, as well as an extra-budgetary allocation made for a business audit of the PA. The Standing Committee also agreed to adopt two changes to the Rules of Procedure that require taking gender balance into account when making appointments.

In her report, President Cederfelt stressed that her focus has been on ending the war in respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Secretary General Roberto Montella noted that while the OSCE's governmental side has been largely paralyzed by its consensus rule, the PA remains very active and vocal.

Off-site ad hoc committee activity explores Canadian approach to migration

Members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, led by Committee Chair and PA Vice-President Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom), visited the NGO S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in Vancouver's Chinatown on Friday. The visit, organized by Head of the Canadian Delegation Hedy Fry, was intended to explore best practices and challenges regarding the sponsorship of refugees and the integra-

tion and settlement of newcomers to Canada. Following remarks by Dr. Fry and Vice-President Pritchard, the panel featured an overview of Canada's immigration and refugee programmes by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA), as well as presentations on the services provided by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the NGO "Rainbow Refugee."