

General Committees complete work and elect leaders for 2023-2024



Voting in the Second Committee, 3 July.

Chaired by Richard Hudson (United States), the First Committee on Monday considered the supplementary item The Wagner Group's Terroristic Nature and Actions, co-sponsored by Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) and Marc Veasey (United States). The resolution was amended and unanimously adopted. The supplementary item Future Generations was introduced by its principal sponsor, Farah Karimi (Netherlands), and was unanimously adopted without amendments. The committee then elected its leadership

for the coming year, with Richard Hudson (United States) re-elected Chair, Costel Neculai Dunava (Romania) Vice-Chair, and Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) Rapporteur.

The Second Committee re-elected Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) Chair, Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) Vice-Chair, and Gudrun Kugler (Austria) Rapporteur.

Chaired by Nikoloz Samkharadze (Georgia), the Third Committee considered Penalizing Deportation of Ukrainian Children, Prosecuting Perpetrators, and Ensuring their Return, principally sponsored by Renata Alt (Germany), and The Role of National Parliaments in Enhancing Participation of Civil Society in Parliamentary and Decision-Making Processes, principally sponsored by Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), both of which were adopted. The then committee chose its leadership, with Lucie Potůčková (Czech Republic) elected Chair, Sargis Khandanyan (Armenia) Vice-Chair, and Malik Ben Achour (Belgium) Rapporteur.

Plenary focuses on antisemitism and gendered consequences of armed conflict



Plenary session on 3 July

OSCE parliamentarians met in plenary session on Monday and considered two supplementary items, Rising Antisemitism in the OSCE Region, principally sponsored by Ben Cardin (United States), and The Gendered Consequences of Armed Conflicts, principally sponsored by Hedy Fry (Canada). In his remarks, Cardin, who serves as Special Representative on Antisemitism, Racism, and Intolerance, urged OSCE participating States to use all

available tools to counter antisemitism and discrimination. Fry, who serves as Special Representative on Gender Issues, underlined the high risk of human trafficking for women, and called for ensuring access to health care services for women who are displaced. Both supplementary items were adopted unanimously.

Chaired by outgoing President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), the plenary session featured speeches by the three candidates running for the post of President of the Assembly, Pere Joan Pons (Spain), Pia Kauma (Finland), and Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom), as well as Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees, Special Representatives, and heads of recent OSCE PA election observation missions. President Cederfelt also reported on the OSCE PA's Call for Action – Helsinki +50 initiative, highlighting recent work and upcoming activities, followed by an open debate.

CCT meeting and side events focus on Ukraine, nuclear threats, antisemitism

The OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism met Monday on the sidelines of the Annual Session. Chaired by Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), the meeting featured a presentation by Prof. Jason Blazakis. Discussing Russia's Wagner Group, Blazakis noted that it has committed many human rights abuses including summary executions, rape, torture, and child abductions. To counter this alarming trend, he urged increased monitoring by international and national bodies. The CCT meeting also included a review of implemented and upcoming activities.

Other side events on Monday focused on issues including nuclear threat reduction, the prospects for prosecuting the Russian leadership for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, and countering the rise in antisemitism. Focusing on the development of national strategies for parliaments and governments, the antisemitism event was hosted by OSCE PA Special Representative on Antisemitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin (United States), and featured

the participation of Anti-Defamation League Vice-President Susan Heller Pinto, ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci, and Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Antisemitism.

Co-hosted by Head of the Norwegian OSCE PA Delegation Siv Mossleth and Head of the Ukrainian Delegation Mykyta Poturaiev, the event "Mobilisation for Justice in Ukraine" featured presentations by Prof. Mark Kersten from the University of the Fraser Valley, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch Rachel Denber, and Deputy Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee Gunnar M. Ekelove-Slydal. The discussion focused on the need for an unequivocal international legal response for all victims, stressing that there can be no lasting peace without accountability.

The Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) held a side event on nuclear threat reduction focused on the preparatory process for the upcoming UN Summit of the Future.