

## OSCE PA's 31st Annual Session opens in Bucharest



Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, Pia Kauma and Dan Barna, 29 June 2024

The Bucharest Annual Session opened Saturday with speeches reaffirming the need to uphold international commitments by ensuring that the OSCE can deliver effectively on its mandate. Speaking at the opening session, President of the Senate of Romania Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, Head of the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE PA Dan Barna and OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) recalled the enduring importance of dialogue, co-operation, and reaffirming the OSCE's shared principles.

Opening the session, President Ciucă noted that the OSCE PA's work in Bucharest will help advance international security. He focused on the security challenges resulting from the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, pointing out that the war has caused a fundamental rupture in the international order and underlining the need to support Ukraine's ability to defend itself. The OSCE plays a key

role in building security, he said, and Romania will remain a partner in this mission.

Barna, who serves as Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, said that as firm supporters of democracy, peace, and stability, Romania is pleased to host the 31st Annual Session. The OSCE's work positively impacts the lives of over a billion people, he stressed, both through political dialogue and practical activities.

Noting that the OSCE PA takes a holistic approach to security, President Kauma emphasized the need to counter hate crimes and violent extremism while promoting human rights, sustainable environment and stability. Particularly important, she stressed, is renewed focus on ending the war in Ukraine with full respect for the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity. She also discussed the Israel-Hamas war, noting that the horror of the 7 October attacks last year and the ongoing loss of life in Gaza are tragedies that weigh heavily on the hearts of OSCE parliamentarians.

Also in the plenary session on Saturday, delegates considered two supplementary items: one dealing with the war in Ukraine, principally sponsored by Mykyta Poturaiev (Ukraine), and one on the deteriorating human rights situation in the Transdnistrian region of Moldova, principally sponsored by Veronica Rosca (Moldova). Both were adopted with overwhelming support.

## Standing Committee re-elects SG Montella, allocates 16 supplementary items



The Assembly's Standing Committee meeting on 29 June

Following a unanimous endorsement by the OSCE PA's Bureau in April, the Standing Committee on Saturday overwhelmingly re-elected Secretary General Roberto Montella for another five-year term. Upon his re-election, the Secretary General said that he is honoured to continue serving the Assembly, and noted that the confidence placed in him is an endorsement of the International Secretariat as a whole.

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) thanked Romania on behalf of the Assembly for hosting Annual Session and highlighted a number of areas affecting long-term strategic planning for the PA. In particular, she emphasized the nexus between security and artificial intelligence and the importance of the Mediterranean dimension. She also highlighted the memorandum of understanding recently signed with the Luxembourg Delegation to bolster activities in Southeast and Eastern Europe.

OSCE PA Treasurer Johan Büser reported to the

Standing Committee on the present financial situation of the Assembly, noting that new efficiencies have been introduced to compensate for the non-contribution of the Russian Federation and thanking delegations for extra-budgetary contributions. Büser also pointed out that financial rules have been updated to allow for regular performance audits. The proposed budget for the 2024-2025 Financial Year was approved.

Sixteen supplementary items were allocated for consideration in plenaries and general committees. Three were allocated to plenary sessions, including the supplementary items on ten years of armed aggression against Ukraine, AI and the fight against terrorism, and the human rights situation in the Transdnistrian region of Moldova. Four supplementary items were allocated to the First Committee, four to the Second Committee, and five to the Third Committee.

The First Committee will debate supplementary items related to synthetic opioids and organized crime, the weaponization of sexual violence in conflict zones, building a comprehensive European security architecture, and strengthening support for Ukraine. The Second Committee will consider items on corruption and foreign policy, climate change and water scarcity, youth perspectives on international relations, and environmental protection in armed conflicts. The Third Committee will debate human trafficking, migration, antisemitism, journalism and gender-related challenges, and civil society.