

Foreign Minister addresses Assembly as general committees continue work



Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen addresses the Assembly, 6 July.

Speaking at the OSCE PA's First Committee meeting on Monday, Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen emphasized the enduring relevance of the Helsinki principles amid rising geopolitical tensions, democratic backsliding, hybrid threats, and eroding trust. He highlighted the OSCE's vital role in dialogue, conflict prevention, and supporting democratic institutions, calling for unwavering support for Ukraine against Russian aggression, stronger sanctions, accountability for war crimes, and the release of detained OSCE officials.

Following the Foreign Minister's address, the First Committee resumed work on the draft resolution by Tobias Winkler (Germany). Following a lively debate, the committee agreed to several amendments before adopting the resolution by an overwhelming majority. The committee then debated and adopted the supplementary items "Countering the Online Radicalization of Youth," principally sponsored by Kamil Aydin (Türkiye) and "Strengthening a Comprehensive, Co-operative and People-Centred Approach to Combating Drug Trafficking and Drug Use and Fighting Organized Crime and All Forms of Mafia in the OSCE Area," principally sponsored by Eugenio Zoffili (Italy).

The Second Committee opened on Monday with con-

sideration of Rapporteur Paula Cardoso (Portugal)'s draft resolution. Agreeing to several amendments, the committee adopted the resolution by a vote of 41-5 before moving on to consider supplementary items. "Keeping Youth at the Centre: Strengthening Democracy, Security and Human Capital in the OSCE Region amid Demographic Change," principally sponsored by Gudrun Kugler (Austria), was adopted with overwhelming support.

"Countering Transnational Financial Repression and the Weaponization of Interpol Executive Management, AMLL/CFT, and Cybersecurity," principally sponsored by Mauro Del Barba (Italy), was also adopted overwhelmingly, as was "Advancing Co-operation in the Governance of Artificial Intelligence within the OSCE Region," principally sponsored by Federica Onori (Italy), and "Youth Perspectives on Affordable Housing as a Pillar of Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region," principally sponsored by Lucija Tacer Perlin (Slovenia).

In the Third Committee, debate resumed on Rapporteur Carina Odebrink (Sweden)'s draft resolution, with delegates raising a range of issues including freedom of speech, human trafficking, rule of law, and civil society. The committee then amended and adopted the resolution with overwhelming support.

Members also adopted two supplementary items in the Third Committee: "Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Fostering Dialogue and Deepening Co-operation Across OSCE Participating States," principally sponsored by Baroness Rosie Winterton (United Kingdom), and "Upholding Election Integrity and Fundamental Freedoms in Georgia," principally sponsored by Joe Wilson (United States). The committee resumes its work on Tuesday.

Side events focus on Ukraine, demographic change, Central Asia and international law

A side event on Monday highlighted the ongoing forcible deportation and transfer of thousands of Ukrainian children by Russia since 2022. Special Envoy Carina Ödebrink (Sweden) presented her 2026 report, noting limited returns, forced adoptions, Russification, and identification obstacles. Participants, including Ukrainian, UN, ICC, and Council of Europe representatives, called for enhanced co-operation, accountability, and trauma-informed reintegration to uphold international law.

Another event focused on investigating crimes committed by Russia against media professionals in Ukraine since 2022. Sponsored by the OSCE PA's Ukrainian and French Delegations, working together with the Temporary Investigative Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Institute of Mass Information, and Reporters Without Borders, the event focused on the results of the parliamentary commission's work and highlighted international mechanisms for documenting Russia's crimes against journalists, with a view towards bringing perpetrators to justice.

Sponsored by Gudrun Kugler (Austria), the side event "Security in the Light of Demographic Change" presented demographic decline as a strategic challenge for free, stable, and resilient societies, offering concrete responses for strengthening demographic resilience,



Participants of the side event on deported Ukrainian children, 6 July

intergenerational solidarity, and long-term security. Kugler presented key findings and insights from her work, drawing on engagement with parliamentarians, government representatives, experts, and international partners.

Another side event, sponsored by Head of Tajikistan's Delegation Mahmadsloh Gulzoda and including the participation of Special Representative on Central Asia Angelos Syrigos (Greece), focused on the Central Asian region as a platform for strengthening dialogue, trust and security in the OSCE area and beyond.

A side event sponsored by the Dutch Delegation focused on international law, highlighting international humanitarian law and international human rights law as fundamental components of the comprehensive security concept of the OSCE. The Dutch event served as a prelude to Tuesday's general debate on "International Law and Shared Principles: Foundations for Security and Co-operation in the OSCE Area."