

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 22nd Autumn Meeting



OSCE PA

DUBLIN

2-4 October 2024

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**OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's
22nd Autumn Meeting**

**Dublin, Ireland
2-4 October 2024**

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Summary

Some 200 OSCE parliamentarians met in Dublin for the 22nd Autumn Meeting on 2-4 October 2024. Hosted by the Houses of the Oireachtas, the Autumn Meeting consisted of a meeting of the Standing Committee, the Mediterranean Forum, meetings of the PA's ad hoc committees, and a Parliamentary Conference held under the theme "Fifty Years After Helsinki: The Role of Parliaments in Reinforcing the OSCE's Comprehensive Model of Peace and Security."

In three working sessions of the conference, parliamentarians heard addresses by ministers of various Irish agencies and representatives of international organizations. In the first session, chaired by President Pia Kauma (Finland), parliamentarians discussed the OSCE's conflict cycle, particularly the role of dialogue facilitation, conflict resolution, mediation support, conciliation, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Chaired by Pere Joan Pons (Spain), Vice-President of the OSCE PA and Special Representative on Climate Change, the second session focused on addressing the climate crisis and the role of MPs in fulfilling global commitments ahead of COP29. Panelists underlined the impact of climate change on global security and spoke about the role of parliamentarians in holding governments to account in implementing international commitments on climate change.

The third session, chaired by OSCE PA

Vice-President and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Daniela De Ridder (Germany), focused on enhancing migration governance in the OSCE region to foster sustainable development. The closing session included speeches by President Kauma, Irish Senate Chair Jerry Buttimer, and Head of Ireland's OSCE PA Delegation Michael Creed. Secretary General Roberto Montella also spoke, expressing thanks to the Irish hosts and to OSCE parliamentarians for a fruitful conference.

The Autumn Meeting concluded with a meeting of the Mediterranean Forum focused on the situation in the Middle East. Chaired by OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs Pascal Allizard (France), the open debate included the participation of more than 40 lawmakers from some 20 countries. Special Representative Allizard opened the debate by highlighting the urgency of ending the conflict through collective diplomatic mobilization. Tijana Davidovac (Serbia), representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, also offered opening remarks, stressing the role of parliamentarians in supporting a resolution of the crisis.

On the margins of the Autumn Meeting, the ad hoc committees on counter-terrorism, migration, and Ukraine, as well as the Network of Young Parliamentarians and the Subcommittee on Rules of Procedure, met to discuss ongoing work and a range of relevant issues.



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The 22nd Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA





Parliamentary Conference Inaugural Session

The inaugural session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Autumn Meeting convened in Dublin on 2 October 2024. The session commenced with welcoming remarks from OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) who expressed gratitude to the Irish hosts for their hospitality. President Kauma introduced the agenda for the meeting and underscored the importance of the Assembly's work in addressing the contemporary challenges facing the OSCE region.

Inaugural Session



Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Speaker of the Lower House of Ireland

Speaker Seán Ó Fearghaíl highlighted the significance of the conference theme, “Fifty Years After Helsinki: The Role of Parliaments in Reinforcing the OSCE’s Comprehensive Model of Peace and Security.” Ó Fearghaíl emphasized the ongoing relevance of the principles established in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, pointing out that these commitments on political, military, economic, environmental, and human rights issues continue to shape the landscape of international relations today.

Ó Fearghaíl also drew attention to the current geopolitical realities characterized by uncertainty and instability. He acknowledged that parliamentarians have a clear role to play in reinforcing the OSCE’s comprehensive model of security. With rising challenges to democracy and the increasing frequency of conflicts, he urged delegates to raise awareness and engage actively with their governments on critical issues such as corruption, election integrity, and human rights protection. Ó Fear-

ghaíl underlined that the strength of the OSCE lies in its ability to bring together countries with differing values, cultures, and historical experiences to establish common rules and foster consensus through dialogue.

In reflecting on the humanitarian crises ongoing in the Middle East and Ukraine, Ó Fearghaíl implored fellow lawmakers to maintain focus on these conflicts and the profound impact they have on civilians, particularly women and children. He called for concerted efforts to end indiscriminate violence and protect innocent lives. His address was a poignant reminder of the challenges that persist and the collective responsibility of parliamentarians to advocate for peace and humanitarian assistance.

Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA

Following Ó Fearghaíl, President Kauma took the floor to share her reflections on Ireland’s unique journey towards peace and reconciliation. She noted that Ireland’s transformation, marked by the Good Friday Agreement of

1998, serves as a model for conflict resolution and highlights the power of dialogue in overcoming entrenched disputes. President Kauma emphasized that the spirit of co-operation and mutual respect embodied in the Good Friday Agreement should guide the OSCE as it faces its most significant challenges since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

President Kauma's address also reiterated the importance of multilateralism and collective action in fostering security and stability. She expressed confidence that the discussions held during the conference would be enriched by the lessons drawn from Ireland's experiences, particularly regarding effective management of the conflict cycle. Furthermore, she underscored the urgency of addressing climate change, calling it a critical security challenge that requires immediate action from all OSCE participating States.

Michael Creed, Head of the Irish Delegation to the OSCE PA

Michael Creed highlighted Ireland's long-standing commitment to the OSCE since its founding. Creed outlined the Assembly's key role in promoting peace, security, and respect



for human rights through parliamentary diplomacy. He illustrated this commitment by sharing his experience as the Special Co-ordinator for an OSCE election observation mission in

Azerbaijan in August 2024, which assessed the country's parliamentary elections for their adherence to OSCE commitments, noting that this endeavour exemplified how parliamentary diplomacy can contribute to the consolidation of democracy and foster trust.

- Michael Creed

The session concluded with a call to action for all delegates to engage actively in the forthcoming discussions, emphasizing the critical need for collective dialogue on issues such as climate action, migration governance, and the OSCE's conflict cycle. The Assembly was reminded of its pivotal role in shaping a more secure and equitable future through commitment to shared values and collaborative approaches.

Session One

The OSCE's conflict cycle:
Dialogue facilitation, conflict
resolution, mediation support,
conciliation and post-conflict
rehabilitation

Chaired by Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA, session one centered on the challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding within the OSCE's conflict cycle. Parliamentarians explored the importance of dialogue facilitation, conflict resolution, mediation support, conciliation, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

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Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA

President Kauma opened the session by remarking that it was taking place within the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, as well as ongoing challenges in the South Caucasus, and a difficult situation in Moldova. Nevertheless, she emphasized that the OSCE's toolbox uniquely enables it to address such complex issues, and expressed hope that the political will could be found to do so.

"As we reflect on these active and unsolved

conflicts, it is important to also acknowledge the positive impact that sustained international engagement can have," she said.

As we reflect on these active and unsolved conflicts, it is important to also acknowledge the positive impact that sustained international engagement can have.

- Pia Kauma

The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine has challenged the OSCE's core principles, President Kauma said, but despite challenges, there are examples that can provide reassurance. The Western Balkans, for example, continue to experience peace and stability, thanks in large part to the OSCE's field operations and the international community's collective commitment to building peace through dialogue, reconciliation, and institution-building.

Bertie Ahern, former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland

Bertie Ahern highlighted the experiences of Ireland in overcoming conflict and division, noting that vital lessons have been learned about the importance of long-term commitment to reconciliation efforts. Ahern reflected on the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, emphasizing that enduring peace requires inclusive, locally driven efforts with active civil society participation, particularly involving youth and women, and underscoring that peace is a dynamic process that needs sustained commitment. Ahern stressed that successful mediation, as seen in Ireland, depends on robust institutional frameworks, cross-community dialogue, and consistent international support, all of which are essential for fostering and maintaining stability through co-ordinated and inclusive peace processes.

Shawn Decaluwe, OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Officer-in-Charge, Deputy Director for Operations Service

Shawn Decaluwe of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) outlined the technical and operational aspects of conflict response, noting that while the OSCE's early-warning systems and resources are extensive, their effectiveness is often limited by a lack of political consensus and resource constraints within the organization. He pointed out that OSCE tools like the Situation Room help provide real-time updates, and called for stronger, more flexible applications of OSCE resources to allow timely responses to emerging crises. Decaluwe urged OSCE members to boost resources for these tools and emphasized the importance of enhancing multilateral co-operation to ensure prompt and effective intervention across the conflict cycle.

Argyro Kartsonaki, Senior Researcher, Centre for OSCE Research

Argyro Kartsonaki from the Centre for OSCE Research expanded on the role of international organizations in conflict mediation. She highlighted the essential role of international actors in the mediation space, particularly through maintaining impartiality, ensuring legitimacy, and pooling resources. These elements are crucial for effectively easing tensions, she said, especially in secessionist conflicts, where an unbiased and well-resourced approach can support constructive dialogue. Kartsonaki further emphasized that youth engagement is essential in conflict prevention, particularly as a deterrent against radicalization. The OSCE's field operations, she noted, play a crucial role in multilevel dialogue, particularly at the grassroots level where local concerns can be addressed directly through tailored approaches. She argued that parliamentarians have a unique role in setting the stage for conflict resolution by ensuring consistent political will.

Debate

Participants focused on the OSCE's evolving role and challenges in the current international security architecture. Many expressed concern over the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, stressing the negative impact of such unresolved conflicts on broader European stability. The necessity for bolstering OSCE's mediation capabilities was repeatedly raised, with calls for greater resources and more frequent application of preventive diplomacy measures. Several delegates noted the importance of OSCE's election observation missions and transparency-building measures, noting that fostering trust among OSCE participating States remains a foundational goal.








Session Two

Addressing the climate crisis: The role of MPs in fulfilling global commitments ahead of COP29

Chaired by OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Climate Change Pere-Joan Pons (Spain), session two was devoted to addressing the climate crisis and the role of MPs in fulfilling global commitments ahead of COP29 in Baku. Participants listened to presentations by Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for the Environment, Communications and Climate, and Transport; Sinead Walsh, Climate Director at Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs; and Jim Skea, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Professor of Sustainable Energy at Imperial College, London.

A middle-aged man with short grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, is seated at a conference table. He is looking towards the left of the frame. In front of him are two clear glass water bottles and a microphone. A nameplate is visible in the foreground.

MARCO BONABELLO

SENIOR ADVISOR

OSCE PA



Pere Joan Pons, OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Climate Change

Opening the second session of the Parliamentary Conference, OSCE PA Vice-President Pere Joan Pons (Spain) underlined that in light of ongoing conflicts and other challenges, it is vital to continue prioritizing climate issues. The world is facing a critical transition towards climate collapse, he said, requiring urgent and concerted political action. Pollution and extreme weather are already claiming lives, necessitating a commitment to zero emissions for future generations, Pons said, underlining that COP29 presents an opportunity to accelerate this change, supported by a robust parliamentary call to action from the OSCE PA. It is essential that the transition is equitable, protecting vulnerable populations and ensuring that the financial burden does not fall disproportionately on the middle and working classes but is shared fairly. He highlighted that global security and climate security are interconnected, demanding prompt action and collaborative investment from all stakeholders.

Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for the Environment, Communications and Climate, and Transport, former leader of the Green Party of Ireland

Eamon Ryan noted that reaching global consensus on climate change remains a formidable challenge, hindered by ongoing geopolitical conflicts as well as a lack of political will in some countries. Nevertheless, he said, significant progress that was made at COP28 in Dubai marked a crucial step toward the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, with goals to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency. The forthcoming COP29 in Baku, he stressed, will prioritize climate finance, adaptation strategies, and addressing loss and damage, underscoring the need for a comprehensive financing approach, including reforms to multilateral development banks and carbon markets. The success of negotiations in Baku is essential for advancing future agreements, as addressing climate challenges is integral to global security, conflict reduction, migration management, and promotion of fair trade.



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Sinead Walsh, Climate Director at Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs

Sinead Walsh emphasized the connection between investing in climate transition and promoting peace, highlighting Ireland's leadership in this area. She underscored the essential role of parliamentarians in shaping the political momentum for climate action, referencing expectations for COP29 and insights from recent UN General Assembly deliberations.

Her presentation also focused on setting a new climate goal for the international community, a politically complex task, alongside anticipated progress in carbon market negotiations. Ireland's enduring commitment to climate adaptation was emphasized, including in the economic sector, with the latest national budget dedicating substantial financial resources to addressing loss and damage in developing countries. In this regard, she pointed out that Ireland is leading by example.

Jim Skea, Chair of the IPCC and Professor of Sustainable Energy at Imperial College, London

Jim Skea stressed that immediate and deep emission cuts are vital to keeping global warming below 1.5°C, a temperature many scientists see as a possible tipping point that would unleash catastrophic outcomes. He highlighted the IPCC reports that outline measures across energy, transport, and other sectors to reduce emissions, with potential for greater impact if scaled up.

Adaptation efforts are currently fragmented and inadequate, he said, especially for vulnerable populations. Moreover, financial gaps persist, with only 4-8 per cent of climate finance allocated to adaptation. Skea also highlighted that parliamentarians play a key role in addressing the gaps in emissions reduction and policy implementation. They should actively engage with their constituents and base their actions on a broad understanding of diverse public perspectives.

Session Two



Debate

In the debate, lawmakers from across the OSCE area highlighted the pressing need to balance economic development with environmental sustainability, addressing the geopolitical and security impacts of climate change. Members also emphasized the role of scientific collaboration to understand and mitigate these impacts.

The upcoming COP29 in Azerbaijan and other international forums were noted as critical platforms for dialogue and co-operation, with parliamentarians emphasizing the need for stronger climate finance, youth engagement, and the adoption of innovative technologies such as green hydrogen. Lawmakers stressed the urgency of reducing emissions, especially in light of recent climate-related disasters like floods, droughts, and wildfires.

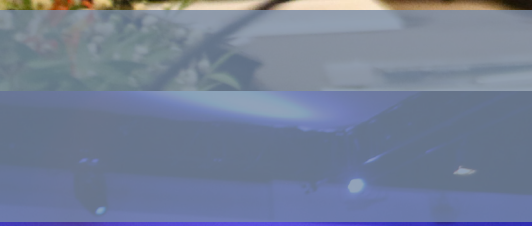
OSCE PA Members also underlined the interconnectedness of environmental protection, social cohesion, and sustainable economics, noting the importance of renewable energy and the OSCE's potential to lead in disaster risk management. The debate underscored the importance of integrating climate issues into national policies and using legislative powers to support robust climate action.

Additionally, members highlighted the challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of education and knowledge sharing, the unique vulnerabilities of small island states, and specific challenges facing the Arctic region and indigenous communities. The evolving energy strategies in the EU, with a renewed focus on nuclear and gas-fired plants in some countries, were also discussed as part of the broader response to climate change.

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Session Three

Enhancing migration governance in the OSCE region to foster sustainable development

Session three of the Parliamentary Conference, chaired by Vice-President Daniela De Ridder (Germany), focused on “Enhancing migration governance in the OSCE region to foster sustainable development.” The session featured remarks by Sarah Léonard, Jean Monnet Chair on Migration, Security, and Intelligence in the European Union and Co-Director of the DCU Conflict Institute, and Amr Taha, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor at the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



DANIELA DE RIDDER

Session Three

Daniela De Ridder, OSCE PA Vice-President and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

Vice-President De Ridder opened the session by highlighting the complexities of migration, which she noted present both challenges and opportunities. With this in mind, she urged a positive and comprehensive approach that addresses root causes as well as humanitarian concerns. De Ridder emphasized the importance of adherence to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's "Leave No One Behind" principle, highlighting its potential to address demographic challenges, labour shortages, and to foster social cohesion.

Vice-President De Ridder identified divisive rhetoric as a key obstacle to the integration of migrants and underlined the responsibility of policymakers to encourage effective, fact-based policies and to fight against prejudice and division. She called for a whole-of-society approach involving civil society, local authorities, and migrant communities themselves, with a particular emphasis on the role of women and young people.

De Ridder also reflected on takeaways from the September 2024 field visit to Morocco by the PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, emphasizing Morocco's vulnerable location at the intersection of major migration routes. De Ridder shared Morocco's innovative approaches to tackling challenges of migration, including circular migration and brain drain, through which it is positioning itself as a leader in migration and asylum reforms in the MENA region.

In closing, De Ridder called for a constructive approach to migration, highlighting its potential to drive sustainable development in the OSCE region. In this regard, she underscored the vital role of parliamentarians in fostering a positive, inclusive narrative on migration.

Sarah Léonard, Jean Monnet Chair on Migration, Security, and Intelligence in the European Union and Co-Director of the DCU Conflict Institute

Dr. Léonard reflected on the staggering number of deaths and disappearances in the central Mediterranean, the deadliest migration route in the world. She identified three key factors driving migration and deaths of migrants and refugees.

First, she highlighted civil strife and war, noting that one in seven people globally have been exposed to conflict this year, with 50 countries affected by high levels of violence. Second, she emphasized the role of natural disasters and climate change, warning that up to one billion people could be displaced by 2050 due to these causes. Finally, Dr. Léonard expressed concern over the lack of safe migration pathways to Europe, where border violence and pushbacks often force migrants into the hands of smugglers, resulting in dangerous and deadly journeys. She also underlined Europe's own migration history and its international commitments, particularly the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In conclusion, Dr. Léonard urged to rethink



Europe's migration governance, emphasizing migrants' role in tackling demographic challenges. While supporting border control, she highlighted the importance of respecting human rights to uphold Europe's international standing.

Amr Taha, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor, Regional Office for Europe, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Amr Taha presented key facts and figures that underscore the significant role of migration in global development. Considering the challenges posed by population and labour force declines in many OSCE countries, he highlighted 60 per cent of the world's migrant workers reside in Europe and Central Asia. These workers strengthen economic resilience

in their home and host countries, with the above-mentioned regions receiving approximately \$243.8 billion in remittances in 2023. Taha emphasized the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration's role in fostering a positive approach to migration's developmental potential, highlighting the PA's responsibility to bridge international commitments with national policies and drive impactful change. Namely, through efforts in combating misinformation and promoting media literacy, inspired by initiatives like the Global Migration Media Academy in Ireland, and advocating for stronger evidence-based migration policies grounded in reliable research.

Finally, Taha reaffirmed IOM's commitment to strengthening its partnership with the OSCE PA to address the complex migration challenges facing the region.

Debate

Parliamentarians expressed significant concern regarding the situations in Ukraine, the Middle East and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. While there was a broad consensus on the need for reform in migration governance, opinions were divided on the most appropriate approach based on diverse perspectives and experiences.

A number of parliamentarians emphasized the importance of upholding human rights, citing the OSCE PA's 2024 Bucharest Declaration and stressing the positive impacts migration could have on cross-sectoral issues fostering economic growth and development. Conversely, others voiced concerns about the capacity of their countries' infrastructure to accommodate migrants, stressing the welfare of national cit-

izens and the protection of national security, and highlighting challenges related to irregular migration. While there was wide agreement that effective migration governance is a critical component of ensuring sustainable development, the impacts of migration on security and identity were also stressed as important.

Moreover, the debate touched on the need for shared responsibility in migration governance, with some advocating for a shift toward a more humanitarian approach, as well as addressing issues like counterterrorism and organized crime. Ultimately, some parliamentarians focused on sustainable development through the creation of safer migration pathways, while others called for increased support to countries of origin through development aid to address the root causes of migration.





Closing Session

Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA

The closing session of the Parliamentary Conference was marked by a spirit of collaboration and reflection on the discussions that had unfolded over the previous days. President Kauma opened the session by welcoming Senator Jerry Buttimer, Chair of the Upper House of the Irish Parliament, and Michael Creed TD, Head of the Irish Delegation to the OSCE PA. Kauma expressed deep gratitude for the participation and contributions of all delegates, noting the enriching discussions that characterized the conference.

President Kauma also highlighted the complexities currently facing the OSCE, emphasizing hope that the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting in December will facilitate agreements on key issues such as leadership and budget allocations. She underscored the importance of the Parliamentary Assembly remaining active and engaged during this challenging period. In this regard, she announced an upcoming OSCE PA visit to Serbia, aimed at gaining firsthand insights into the OSCE's field operations.

As the Assembly prepared to observe elections in four different countries, President Kauma reminded attendees of their crucial role in reinforcing democratic principles throughout the OSCE region. She reaffirmed the importance of unity in the face of disagreements, advocating for the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act as a guiding principle. President Kauma concluded her remarks by acknowledging the hard work of the hosts and the International Secretariat, urging delegates to recognize the contributions of the staff involved in organizing the meeting.

Senator Jerry Buttimer, Chair of the Upper House (Seanad Éireann)

Senator Jerry Buttimer reflected on the insights and debates presented throughout the conference. He reiterated that despite differing views, the Assembly's commitment to shared values and the trajectory forward is paramount.

The senator highlighted the special significance of hosting the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Ireland, recognizing the successful collaboration among the organizing teams. He emphasized the importance of discussing the active role of parliamentarians in reinforcing the OSCE's comprehensive peace and security mandates, particularly during these challenging times.

Buttimer recapped some key themes from the working sessions, including the OSCE's conflict cycle, the necessity for inclusive peace processes, and the vital role of civil society. He underscored the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding, a lesson particularly resonant given Ireland's own history of conflict and reconciliation. He pointed out the urgent need to enhance migration governance, advocating for the promotion of regular migration paths and highlighting the role of parliamentarians in fostering dialogue.

In conclusion, Buttimer affirmed that despite the challenges currently facing the OSCE, the conference had demonstrated the potential for parliamentary democracy and diplomacy to create meaningful change. He expressed optimism that OSCE parliamentarians could effectively address common challenges, contributing to a more secure future.

Closing Session

Teachtas



Michael Creed TD, Head of the Irish Delegation to the OSCE PA

Michael Creed recalled the previous gathering of the PA in Dublin 15 years prior during the global financial crisis. He noted the evolution of challenges, including the intertwined issues of peace, security, climate change, and migration. Creed emphasized that while financial crises may be cyclical, the challenges posed by climate change and migration are ongoing and require long-term solutions.

Reflecting on the importance of parliamentary roles in addressing these issues, Creed encouraged individual parliamentarians to engage practically in problem-solving rather than seeking popularity. He expressed confidence in the potential of the OSCE PA to play a significant role in addressing global challenges through international co-operation.

Roberto Montella, Secretary General of the OSCE PA

Secretary General Montella acknowledged

the challenges discussed throughout the conference and commended the leadership and engagement of the Assembly's members. He highlighted the significant attendance and participation of parliamentarians, noting the assembly's overall health and effectiveness.

Montella emphasized the importance of addressing pressing geopolitical issues, including the ongoing situation in the Middle East, and thanked President Kauma for prioritizing these discussions in the agenda. He reiterated that the challenges faced by OSCE countries require collaborative, multilateral approaches, underscoring the assembly's vital role in fostering international dialogue.

In concluding his remarks, Montella expressed gratitude to Ireland for hosting the conference and acknowledged the contributions of Luxembourg, which had recently made significant extra budget contributions to the assembly. He invited the head of the Luxembourg Delegation to the podium for a token of appreciation, reinforcing the spirit of co-operation and solidarity that defines the OSCE.



Mediterranean Forum

Situation in the Middle East

The Mediterranean Forum convened on 4 October, the final day of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Autumn Meeting in Dublin, and was chaired by OSCE PA Special Representative Pascal Allizard (France). Bringing together political leaders to address the region's most pressing challenges, the Mediterranean Forum covered issues including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, climate vulnerability, and migration. Throughout the forum, participants emphasized the critical need for international co-operation and multilateral dialogue, both seen as essential strategies to effectively navigate these interdependent crises.

Mediterranean Forum

Pascal Allizard, Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs

Special Representative Allizard opened the forum with a broad overview of the region's challenges, stressing the Mediterranean's heightened vulnerability to climate change and highlighting how it is also subject to broader geopolitical and social pressures. Key concerns were identified, such as migration, food insecurity and social instability, with Allizard calling for a co-ordinated response to all of these challenges. He underscored the vital role that parliamentarians must play in contributing to sustainable solutions through shared responsibility and collective diplomatic mobilization.

His presentation, accompanied by maps created by historian Pierre Razoux, visually captured the intricate power dynamics in the region, particularly focusing on the growing risks of conflict involving Israel and its neighbours. Lebanon's fragile situation, in particular, was flagged as highly volatile, with the potential for further escalation. The importance of addressing the broader regional power struggles that fuel instability was also underlined, with a caution that "everyone is under threat from everyone else."

Tijana Davidovac, Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

Tijana Davidovac, representing PAM, reiterated the importance of collective action to address the region's challenges, stressing in particular the need to de-escalate the conflict in the Middle East, establish a permanent

ceasefire, secure the release of all hostages, and to promote all necessary steps needed to reach a long-term solution based on the two-state formula. All sides must step back from the brink, she said, stressing that safeguarding innocent lives must be the priority. Parliamentarians have a role to play in supporting governments in resolving the crisis on the basis of respect for the UN Charter, she said.

Mediterranean Partner Representatives

Representatives from OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation contributed their perspectives, beginning with a delegate from Algeria, who reaffirmed the nation's support for Palestine. Drawing parallels to Algeria's own history of colonization, the delegate emphasized the importance of solidarity and called for greater international efforts.

A Moroccan representative stressed the urgency of humanitarian assistance in conflict zones and advocated for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. Morocco's approach to migration was presented as an example of good practice, emphasizing its commitment to human rights and its collaborative efforts with international partners.

The Israeli Delegation was unable to attend due to the observance of the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah.

Open Debate

During the open debate, delegations ex-

pressed a diverse range of viewpoints. Some delegates focused on Israel's right to defend itself against external aggression, while also emphasizing the necessity of adhering to international law and considering the humanitarian consequences of ongoing conflicts.

Parliamentarians called for a balanced approach that takes into account the complexities at play, such as the malign influence of Iran and its proxies in the region. Other delegations called for stronger diplomatic efforts, urging the international community to move beyond mere statements of condemnation and to take tangible actions to avert wider conflict and facilitate peace.

Several concrete proposals emerged to enhance the OSCE PA's role in addressing regional crises. These included the establishment of a fact-finding mission to gather information from conflict zones, along with deeper co-operation with other parliamentary bodies such as the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It was also suggested that the leadership organize a field visit to the region to engage directly with Israeli and Palestinian authorities, in an effort to foster dialogue and reduce tensions. Members further called for more active dialogue with Mediterranean partners.

A representative invited by Ireland from the Palestinian National Council provided an account of the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, citing around 40,000 fatalities, 100,000 injuries, and the displacement of 1.9 million people. He appealed for an immediate ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian aid, while expressing the Palestinian Authority's readiness to assume control of Gaza as part of an independent Palestinian state. The Palestinian

delegation further argued for Palestine's inclusion in OSCE forums.

As the Mediterranean Forum drew to a close, with 45 interventions from 25 different countries, Allizard reflected on the diversity of perspectives on the conflict, amid which a powerful consensus emerged around the common aspiration for long-lasting peace and stability in the region. He reaffirmed the crucial role that parliamentarians can play in promoting dialogue and cooperation, asserting that their contributions are vital to preventing further escalation of the crisis.

Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA

President Kauma acknowledged the diverse sentiments in her closing remarks. She commended the strong engagement of participants and pledged the OSCE PA's commitment to maintaining a neutral and balanced stance – an approach viewed as essential for effective engagement in the region. President Kauma pledged to continue to leverage all tools of the OSCE PA for parliamentary diplomacy in order to contribute to collective diplomatic mobilization in the region.

Kauma noted that the Parliamentary Assembly exists to be a platform for open dialogue. "We have lived up to this objective today," she said. "In many ways we are divided in our opinions on the conflict taking place in the Middle East, but we are united in our determination to contribute to greater understanding as a way forward to a lasting resolution."

President Kauma also confirmed that the OSCE PA would follow up on the forum's discussions and explore opportunities for deeper co-operation with other international organizations.



Standing Committee Meeting



The Standing Committee consists of the OSCE PA's 57 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, Autumn Meeting and Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget and appoints the Secretary General.

Report of the President

President Kauma reflected on the appointments she made following the Annual Session in Bucharest and highlighted the role of the Special Representatives as one of the PA's most flexible and impactful tools to modernize the Assembly's work. The President then reported on her recent activities, including her address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna and her participation in the European Union Interparliamentary Conference for the

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in Budapest, strengthening the collaboration with the EU on key security issues.

The President also informed the Standing Committee delegates about her visit to Israel and the West Bank, which she undertook with Secretary General Roberto Montella in mid-September, highlighting the OSCE PA's focus on humanitarian concerns, human rights, and political dialogue. In briefing the

Standing Committee Meeting

Standing Committee on planned activities, the President emphasized that the active engagement of members and their commitment to the shared mission, is the driving force behind the OSCE PA's impact.

Special Representative Miodrag Pančeski informed the Standing Committee about the most recent developments on the OSCE governmental side regarding the appointment of new heads of institutions.

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Johan Büser (Sweden) presented his report, providing an overview of the financial situation and noting the impact of the polarized geopolitical landscape on the financial stability of the organization. He highlighted the ongoing financial implications resulting from the Russian Federation's non-payment of their annual contributions since the fiscal year 2022-2023, while stressing that the OSCE PA has remained agile and proactive in mitigating the financial consequences of the missing contributions. He also informed the Standing Committee of the Assembly's performance audit conducted by Deloitte, designed to enhance the overall effectiveness of the PA.

With regard to the Assembly's cornerstone activity of election observation missions (EOMs), he noted that the busy electoral calendar for 2024-2025, and particularly the busy election cycle in autumn 2024, necessitates careful financial planning but that the budget allocation ensures the Assembly's responsiveness and effectiveness in covering all planned missions within the allocated budget.

Report of the Secretary General

Secretary General Roberto Montella presented his report and informed the Standing Committee of the Secretariat's recent activities. He highlighted work in South East Europe, including the organization of the second inter-parliamentary forum of Delegations from South East Europe, as well as the successful visits of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration to Morocco and of the Network of Young Parliamentarians to Norway, and the exceptionally busy upcoming elections season.

The Secretary General also emphasized the challenging situation of the OSCE governmental side, particularly regarding the appointments of the four most senior officials, stressing the need for parliamentarians to fill this gap by remaining vocal on important issues.

Reflecting on budgetary matters, Montella reported on the Secretariat's economizing efforts and discussed the commencing business/performance audit to be conducted by Deloitte, allowing the Assembly to benefit from independent assessment of its finances and management performance.

Other Business

The Standing Committee members adopted an amendment to the Rules of Procedure to extend the term of the OSCE PA President from one to two years, non-renewable. The Standing Committee also heard reports on election observation missions, the activities of Ad Hoc Committees and upcoming Assembly events and statutory meetings.

Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration was established in 2016 to serve as a focal point for the PA's work in the field of migration. To strengthen the contribution of OSCE parliamentarians in addressing violent extremism, in July 2017 the PA established the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism. The Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine was established in July 2023 to promote support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Meeting of the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine

The meeting of the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine (PSTU) was chaired by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) and Vice-President Mykyta Poturaiev (Ukraine). The PSTU engaged in a strategic discussion to define the way forward in the coming months. The discussion was introduced by President Kauma who outlined her vision for the short- to medium- terms.

The programme proposed by the President included an exchange on thematic priorities, a possible follow-up visit to Kyiv, interaction with the governmental side of the OSCE and with other international entities. The discussion focused on how parliamentarians and the broader international community can most effectively support Ukraine in its fight for its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Several members of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA addressed the PSTU, sharing tragic stories of the ongoing effects of the Russian Federation's aggression, and highlighting priorities for shoring up Ukraine's defences. Ensuring energy security was emphasized as essential, particularly in light of what is expected to be a difficult winter ahead.

Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism

The Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT), chaired by Kamil Aydin (Türkiye), convened for its 19th official meeting, which featured a presentation by Michael McElgunn, Assistant Commissioner of Ireland's National Police and Security Service, the Garda Síochána, who shared insights into the experience of Ireland in the fight against terrorism, including key lessons learned from the last decades, challenges faced today, and the most pertinent counter-terrorism trends.

McElgunn described Ireland's approach to counter-terrorism, recalling the history of violent extremism in Ireland, in particular the terrorist activities of groups such as the Irish Republican Army and its offshoots. Some of the lessons learned in Ireland after decades of counter-terrorism, he said, include the need to ensure that state responses are always conducted under the rule of law in order to maintain legitimacy, and the need for a strong focus on intelligence-gathering and sharing information. It is also important to pay close attention to how external events might exacerbate threats, he said, including the effects of online radicalization.

CCT Chair Kamil Aydin noted the value of examining the Irish experience with terrorism

Ad Hoc Committee Meetings



and briefed the CCT members on upcoming activities, including the Sixth Counter-Terrorism Co-ordination Meeting of Parliamentary Assemblies and the Fourth Parliamentary Policy Dialogue on countering the use of artificial intelligence for terrorist purposes. Both events would be organized in co-operation with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and were scheduled for early December in Italy.

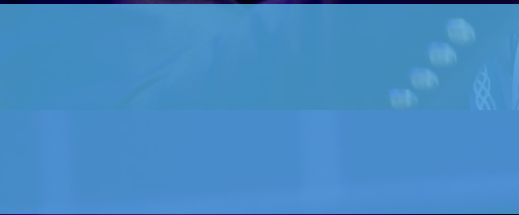
Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

The OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, chaired by Vice-President Dr. Daniela De Ridder (Germany), met on Wednesday to discuss migration trends and upcoming activities. In a presentation by Amr Taha, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), committee members heard about the progress that has been made since the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration. Taha's

remarks focused on promoting sustainable returns and addressing the root causes of migration, as well as its potentially mutually beneficial aspects for both destination countries and countries of origin.

In the discussion, committee members raised concerns about the demographic challenges in Europe and the impact of migration on labour markets. De Ridder stressed the need to adopt a positive narrative, noting that some regions, such as Morocco, face "brain drain" as skilled professionals emigrate. Taha stressed, however, that when well-managed, migration contributes significantly to economic development.

The committee discussed key takeaways from its recent visit to Morocco and proposals for upcoming activities. Vice-President De Ridder also briefly reported on her recent visit to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Ramallah, in which she learned about internal displacement due to ongoing hostilities in the Middle East.



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Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

www.oscepa.org
osce@oscepa.dk

OSCE PA International Secretariat

Tordenskjoldsgade 1
1055 Copenhagen K
Denmark

Tel: +45 33 37 80 40

Fax: +45 33 37 80 30