

## OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President addresses OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna



OSCE Headquarters in Vienna

PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) spoke on 16 September at the Permanent Council in Vienna, urging stronger co-operation within the OSCE and stressing the need to bolster confidence-building mechanisms. President Cederfelt highlighted the announced closure of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk and the imminent danger of cancelling the 2021 OSCE HDIM as troubling developments but pointed to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine as a sign of hope for greater co-operation. She also welcomed the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which has been a top priority of Sweden's Chairpersonship in 2021.

The President underlined the importance of the work of OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives, noting their co-ordination with the OSCE's executive structures in several key areas. With growing concern over climate change, she also pointed to the heightened level of co-operation in the OSCE's economic and environmental dimension, as well as strong synergies in the field of counter-terrorism. Other topics addressed by the President included protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus and the Transdniestrian settlement process.

Looking ahead toward the 50th anniversary of the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, Cederfelt drew attention to the PA's "Call for Action" events, which have been generating ideas to make the OSCE more effective.

While in Vienna, President Cederfelt met with Permanent Council Chairperson Ulrika Funered, for consultations on issues of common concern. Funered informed Cederfelt of topics on the PC's agenda, particularly related to the human dimension, COVID and Ukraine, as well as preparations for Stockholm Ministerial Council. Cederfelt briefed Funered on her activities since taking office this summer, including her recent participation at the IPU Speaker's meeting in Vienna.

## OSCE PA Special Representative on South Caucasus and SG visit Georgia

OSCE PA Special Representative on South Caucasus Kari Henriksen (Norway) and Secretary General Roberto Montella visited Georgia on 18-19 September, holding a series of meetings with government authorities, leaders of political parties and representatives of the international community. The visit focused on domestic and regional challenges, with Henriksen underscoring the importance of political stability, dialogue and compromise, which are also vital for conflict resolution.

The visit of Special Representative Henriksen and Secretary General Montella took place while campaigning for the 2 October local elections in Georgia was ongoing. In a number of meetings held with representatives of European Georgia, United National Movement and Georgian Dream, issues such as the pre-electoral environment, the conduct of the campaign and polarized dialogue in the public sphere were raised.

Henriksen and Montella also met with the Head of the ODIHR Election Observation Mission to the local elections in



Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani meets with Kari Henriksen and Roberto Montella, 18 September, Tbilisi.

Georgia, Ambassador Albert Jonsson, and Deputy Head of the Mission Gilles Saphy, who briefed them on the ongoing work of the election observation mission, which has been present in the country since the beginning of September. Both Henriksen and Montella stressed that they fully support the work of the mission and look forward to the final assessment of the elections.

## PA Special Representative on Fighting Corruption meets with OSCE counterpart

OSCE PA Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) met online on 17 September with Anita Ramasastry, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption, for discussions about developing areas of possible co-operation, including in upcoming official visits and contributions to future initiatives, and how to build political will within all OSCE countries for the anti-corruption agenda.

Charalambides, who also serves as OSCE PA Vice-President, and Ramasastry discussed the corruption challenges posed by blockchain and cryptocurrencies, the risks involved in post-COVID financing of reconstruction policies, and the need for all state officials to abide to strict codes of conduct. In this regard, Charalambides and Ramasastry agreed on the need for stringent regulatory frameworks to prevent opportunities for corruption, including conflicts of interest.

## OSCE PA's Cederfelt, Büser and Lopatka meet with Austrian Speaker Sobotka



Left to right: Reinhold Lopatka, Margareta Cederfelt, Wolfgang Sobotka and Johan Büser

President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and Third Committee Rapporteur Johan Büser (Sweden) met on 15 September with Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the Austrian National Council, and Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism. The four parliamentarians met in Stockholm for discussions on issues on the OSCE agenda, including the situation in Afghanistan. Cederfelt also reiterated the Assembly's gratitude for Austria's hosting of the OSCE PA's Vienna Office.