

Cederfelt addresses Ministerial, holds bilateral meetings in Stockholm



Addressing the opening session of the 28th Ministerial Council on 2 December, OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) called for de-escalation of tensions and for greater solidarity in the OSCE area, highlighting the OSCE as a valuable instrument for dialogue and co-operation in these challenging times. She assured the foreign ministers that the PA will continue to generate the political support for the OSCE to reach its full potential.

While in Stockholm, the President, together with Secretary General Roberto Montella, held a series of bilateral meetings, including with the foreign ministers of Lithuania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Poland. She also had informal ex-

changes with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbaev. She and the Swedish Delegation hosted a conversation with Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tsihanouskaya. Secretary General Montella held a number of exchanges with ministers, including Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei.

The PA also participated in a side event arranged by the Swedish CiO on the human dimension of the OSCE and the failure to hold this year's Human Dimension meeting in Warsaw due to lack of consensus. This was also the subject of a meeting held on the sidelines of the Ministerial on the OSCE PA's Call for Action initiative with several Vice-Presidents of the OSCE PA. At this informal meeting, OSCE PA leaders discussed how to reinvigorate the OSCE leading up to the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025.

Today, SG Montella forwarded the decisions adopted by the Ministerial Council, including an important one on climate change, to heads of OSCE PA delegations and invited the parliamentarians to work in ensuring their implementation on the national level.

Special Rep on Gender Issues urges action against online gender-based violence

As part of the international campaign #16Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) wrote an article for the OSCE Blog, entitled "Gender-based violence online is a crisis." Focusing on the trend of online abuse against women, the article urges the adoption of policies that encourage women to report digital violence. Read the article here: <https://bit.ly/3DviW0d>

Special Rep on Youth Engagement holds meetings in Bishkek

OSCE PA Special Representative on Youth Engagement Farah Karimi (The Netherlands) held a series of meetings in Bishkek last week, including with government representatives and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, focused on youth issues in Kyrgyzstan.

In meetings with Soyuzbek Nadyrbekov, Deputy Director of the Agency on Youth, Physical Culture and Sports, and Taalay Berdiev, Head of the Department of Youth Policy of the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy, Karimi heard about challenges facing youth in the country and what the government is doing to help young people meet their potential. She briefed interlocutors on the OSCE PA's work on youth issues, noting that a number of events have been held by the PA in recent years to



give a voice to young people in policy-making decisions.

Karimi also visited the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and met with senior management to hear about their programmes, and delivered a lecture to students entitled, "In the name of Freedom: How our world has become increasingly unfree since 9/11."

Charalambides lauds open data technology as an important tool against corruption

OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) spoke Wednesday at the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities' event entitled "Open Data in Action: Digital Tools and Platforms for Advancing the Anti-Corruption Agenda," calling for greater transparency and accountability in all public matters.

New technologies can be used to facilitate the reporting of corruption, she said, as well as promote access to official information, monitor the efficiency and integrity of social services, and make financial data more transparent. All of this can help boost good governance and citizens' trust in institutions and democratic processes, she noted, thereby pro-

moting economic growth. "I am pleased to note that many governments have been launching timely e-government initiatives to enhance the efficiency and transparency of public administration and improve interaction with citizens," Charalambides said. "Good governance in public spending can yield benefits for all while lowering the risks for corrupt behavior."

Bringing together government representatives and civil society organizations from the OSCE region as well as international organizations and international experts, the OCEEA's webinar offered an opportunity to discuss open data policies and initiatives that support transformational policies in areas where corruption risks are high.