

PA President and SG participate in OSCE Ministerial Council in Łódź

In a speech at the opening of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Łódź last week, OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) highlighted the compassion on display in Poland in assisting Ukrainian refugees and called for this spirit to inspire the international community to remain firm in its solidarity with Ukraine. She expressed hope that this spirit would strengthen the support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

It also, Cederfelt said, should serve as a reminder of the need to safeguard the European security order and the OSCE's founding document, the Helsinki Final Act. Noting that in just two years, the OSCE will mark the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Accords, she urged continued commitment to the organization and highlighted its tools to build long-lasting peace and stability. "Now is the time to support the OSCE, to fully support the OSCE," Cederfelt said, while also stressing that there can be no impunity for crimes committed in Ukraine. "This OSCE Ministerial Council must recognize the Russian Federation as having committed gross, and still uncorrected violations of the Helsinki Final Act," Cederfelt said.

President Cederfelt was joined in Łódź by OSCE PA Secre-



tary General Roberto Montella, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, Special Representative Amb. Miodrag Pančeski, Presidential Advisor Loic Poulain, and Advisor to the Secretary General Freyja Koci.

While in Łódź, President Cederfelt spoke at the Civil Society Parallel Conference and met with Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in Ukraine, Ambassador Mikko Kinunen, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, and OSCE Special Representative on Freedom of Media Teresa Ribeiro. Other meetings took place, inter alia, with the foreign ministers of Uzbekistan, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Finland, and Azerbaijan.

Special Representative Fry publishes op-ed on gender issues

Marking the 16 Days of Activism campaign, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry published an op-ed at Medium on Tuesday entitled "Gender-based violence in armed conflicts and gendered effects of post-pandemic economic recovery." Read it here: <https://link.medium.com/sllvmtDbxvb>

President Cederfelt meets with Moldova's Popescu and Belarus's Tsikhanouskaya

President Margareta Cederfelt and Head of the Swedish OSCE Delegation Björn Söder met with Moldova Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Nicu Popescu on his working visit to Stockholm on 5-6 December. The sides discussed priorities in the promotion of the European integration agenda, the work of the OSCE field mission in Moldova, regional stability and co-operation, and the effects of Russia's war against Ukraine on Moldova's security.

Moldova hosts approximately 600,000 refugees from Ukraine, it was pointed out, and authorities are actively supporting integration, including providing access to the labour

market, as well as anti-human trafficking efforts. A huge challenge for Moldova is the lack of energy, electricity and gas for the winter, which is exacerbated by rising inflation, but the FM Popescu expressed confidence that Moldova will handle the situation.

On Tuesday, President Cederfelt also met with exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya for discussions on the current status of the opposition movement in Belarus and how the war in Ukraine affects the Belarusian people. The sides discussed possible co-operation with OSCE PA, and how the Assembly can take proactive and concrete steps to support democratization in Belarus.

PA's Shakirov and Bartus promote parliamentarism at Kazakhstan conference



Askar Shakirov speaks at a conference in Astana, 2 December 2022 (Photo: OSCE Programme Office in Astana)

OSCE PA Vice-President Askar Shakirov (Kazakhstan) spoke on 2 December at a conference in Astana focused on developing openness in parliaments. Featuring the participation of parliamentarians, representatives of civil society and experts, the conference – jointly organized by

the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, US AID and several other institutions – sought to increase interaction with the public on issues such as incorporating the work of NGOs in law-making and improving communication with voters.

"Parliamentary openness and inclusivity are essential to build and develop our countries sustainably, including socially, politically and economically," Shakirov said. In this regard, he highlighted the work of the OSCE PA where he serves as Special Representative on Sustainable Development Goals, actively working to promote parliamentarism in the region and the implementation of UN's Sustainable Development Goals in the OSCE area.

The Head of the OSCE PA's Polish Delegation, Barbara Bartus, also joined the event remotely, presenting the experience of Poland on parliamentary openness and effective forms of interaction with civil society and media.