

Kauma and Montella visit Washington to build engagement on Ukraine and OSCE



Roberto Montella and Pia Kauma with Deputy Head of US Delegation and Helsinki Commission Chair Joe Wilson in Washington, 30 January

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) is on a visit to Washington, DC, this week, where she is holding meetings with congressional and governmental leaders, as well as civil society experts, in order to build engagement on priority issues for the OSCE. High on the agenda is the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, strengthening the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly, and possible OSCE election observation in the United States later this year.

Joined by Secretary General Roberto Montella, Kauma is

meeting with Head of US Delegation to the PA Ben Cardin, Deputy Head Joe Wilson, PA Vice-President Roger Wicker, First Committee Chair Richard Hudson, and other members of the US Delegation, as well as senior officials at the State Department and National Security Council. Discussions have focused on ensuring support for PA priorities and maintaining open communication on European security through the OSCE. Given the mounting geopolitical challenges in the world, participants confirmed that continued engagement in the OSCE is critically important.

In meetings with senior officials from the National Conference of State Legislatures and National Association of Secretaries of State, discussions focused on a possible election observation mission to the United States in November. The meetings provided a useful opportunity to consider co-operation with state and local officials related to observation on election day.

Today, Kauma and Montella attended the Balkans Security Forum on 'Malicious Chinese and Russian Influence in the Balkans.'

Bureau members meet for discussions on maximizing OSCE PA's work



Bureau members meet in Copenhagen on 26 January.

Members of the OSCE PA's Bureau met 26 January for an informal working seminar. Chaired by President Pia Kauma in Copenhagen, the hybrid meeting focused on ensuring the maximum impact for the OSCE PA's work.

Discussion touched on election observation, the Russian Federation's ongoing war against Ukraine, political positions

and instruments of the Assembly, the PA's leadership structures and co-operation with the wider OSCE family, OSCE PA finances, and the role of political groups in the Assembly.

Members emphasized the need to anticipate future crises, stressing the importance of early warning mechanisms and the need to properly focus on the conflict cycle. The role of Special Representatives and Ad Hoc Committees was discussed, and in particular, members emphasized the need for appropriate resources to be allocated to them. Priorities must be linked to the organization's financial situation, it was underlined.

Other topics covered included co-operation with other international organizations, the conflict in the Middle East, and migration.

Special Representative Zoffili visits Vienna to build anti-crime partnerships

OSCE PA Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime Eugenio Zoffili (Italy) has concluded a visit to Vienna where he held two days of meetings at the OSCE Secretariat and the Office of the United Nations against Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The visit was an opportunity to assess the current level of threat from organized crime and identify emerging trends and challenges that demand particular attention.

At the UNODC, Special Representative Zoffili discussed the latest drug and human trafficking trends with experts. He talked with UNODC officials about the links between trafficking and terrorism, and learned more about the regional impacts organized crime on Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Underlining the importance of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime's new review mechanism, he stressed the key



Eugenio Zoffili (right) meeting with experts from the Organized Crime Branch of UNODC in Vienna, 30 January

role of parliaments in fighting serious crime.

In discussions, Zoffili underlined the importance of the fight against drug trafficking, in particular, in combating all illicit activities. He also stressed the importance of building international partnerships both on the political and operational levels.

PA participates in Maltese OSCE Chairpersonship opening in Vienna

OSCE PA staff actively participated in the opening of the Maltese OSCE Chairpersonship last week in Vienna. OSCE PA Special Representative, Amb. Miodrag Pančeski, and Chief Political Advisor Francesco Pagani represented the PA at the Annual Meeting of the Chair and the Secretariat with the Heads of Field Operations and Institutions on 25 January, chaired by SG Helga Maria Schmid. Amb. Pančeski expressed the PA's support to CiO Ian Borg and welcomed his engagement with the PA. Pagani also represented the PA at a session with the

Conflict Prevention Centre and the Heads of Field Operations.

Regional meetings on South East Europe, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia were covered by Sherif Abdili, Manuchekhr Salokhudinov, Tim Knoblaue, and Anastasiya Griadasova, respectively. Staff members presented the past year's work in each of the portfolios, recalling the strong engagement of the OSCE PA in each region, and outlined plans for the coming year, including through the continued engagement of Special Representatives.