

## Led by President Kauma, OSCE PA delegation visits Ukraine



OSCE PA delegation with Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk in Kyiv, 5 February 2024

Visiting Kyiv this week, a delegation led by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) underscored the stark reality of war and suffering that Ukraine endures daily. The delegation consisted of four members of the OSCE PA's Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine (PSTU), as well as OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairpersonship in Ukraine, Ambassador Marcel Pesko. Members expressed appreciation for the longstanding contribution of the OSCE on the ground, most recently undertaken by its Support Programme for Ukraine, as well as the valuable work of Special Representative Pesko and ODIHR.

In a speech Tuesday to the Verkhovna Rada, President Kauma underlined the solidarity with Ukraine that the PA has demonstrated since the annexation of Crimea and the onset of hostilities in the Donbas 10 years ago. Her address to the Rada followed an invitation from the Speaker and marked the first time an OSCE PA President has had this honour. Other members of the delegation included PSTU Rapporteur Mark Demesmaeker (Belgium), Siv Mossleth (Norway), and Luís Graça Nunes (Portugal). Talks were held with Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk, Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Dmytro Lubinets, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Iryna Borovets, and members of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA, led by Vice-President Mykyta Poturaiev.

In a meeting of the PSTU in Kyiv, members focused on investigations into war crimes and prospects for establishing a special international tribunal for crimes of aggression, as well as mechanisms to make Russia pay for reconstruction. On Tuesday, they visited Irpin and Gostomel where they met with local authorities and witnessed the devastating effects of the war.

## Special Representative on South East Europe Hadjiyianni visits BiH

OSCE PA Special Representative on South East Europe and Vice-President Europe Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) concluded a three-day visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on 2 February. Hadjiyianni held a series of meetings in the capital with various stakeholders, including parliamentarians, government officials, representatives from the international community, and civil society organizations. The discussions focused on both domestic and regional issues.

In meetings, Special Representative Hadjiyianni spoke about the latest domestic developments and engaged in broader consultations on the Western Balkans. Key topics of discussion included the functionality of state institutions, the reform of the Law on Elections, regional co-operation, reconciliation, rehabilitation, and the European integration process of the Western Balkans. All parties acknowledged that the European Union integration process remains a primary goal for BiH and the most effective incentive to advance the reform process.



Special Representative Hadjiyianni was joined in meetings by the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Brian Aggeler. Hadjiyianni emphasized the importance of the OSCE's presence in the region, particularly through its field operations, and following a visit to the OSCE Mission to BiH headquarters, the Special Representative praised the mission's crucial work for the people and institutions of BiH.

## Kauma and Montella conclude four days of meetings in Washington

Wrapping up a four-day visit to Washington DC on 2 February, OSCE PA President Pia Kauma and Secretary General Roberto Montella expressed appreciation for the strong engagement from the United States in the OSCE, including through the work of the U.S. Helsinki Commission and the active participation of the U.S. Delegation in PA meetings and election observation missions. In order to maintain support for the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and conflict resolution, Kauma said, continued strong engagement from the U.S. is essential.

Kauma and her interlocutors discussed Ukraine, institutional issues facing the OSCE, and the PA's role in the organization.

Upon the invitation of Head of Delegation Joe Wilson, Kauma participated in a special hearing in Congress focused on Russia's abduction of thousands of Ukrainian children and adult civilians as part of its war on Ukraine. Kauma stressed the importance of international co-operation in locating and repatriating those abducted. Kauma and Montella met with members of the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE PA, including Head of Delegation Joe Wilson and Deputy Head Ben Cardin, OSCE PA Vice-President Roger Wicker, OSCE PA Political Affairs Committee Chair Richard Hudson, as well as officials from the State Department and the White House.

## OSCE parliamentarians observe early presidential election in Azerbaijan

More than 80 observers from the OSCE PA are in Azerbaijan for the early presidential election taking place today. The Head of the OSCE PA delegation of observers is OSCE PA Vice-President Daniela De Ridder (Germany) and the Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission is Second Committee Vice-Chair Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine).

Before fanning out around the country, observers partici-

pated in two days of briefings in Baku, where they heard from representatives of the election administration and civil society, candidates, party representatives and experts. The observers are working closely with the OSCE/ODIHR, whose mission is led by Eoghan Murphy, and will assess the election against democratic commitments contained in the OSCE's 1990 Copenhagen Document. They will hold a press conference at 15:00 (UTC+04:00) Thursday to present their findings.