

OSCE parliamentarians gather in Vienna for the 23rd Winter Meeting



OSCE flags flying outside of the Hofburg in Vienna

Some 360 participants, including more than 230 OSCE parliamentarians, are gathering for the OSCE PA's 23rd Winter Meeting, taking place 22-23 February in Vienna, Austria. The meeting opens on Thursday with remarks by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland), President of the Austrian National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, OSCE Chair-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Malta Ian Borg, and OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, followed by a question and answer session.

The Winter Meeting, which will stream live on YouTube, consists of meetings of each of the OSCE PA's general committees, its three ad hoc committees, the Standing Committee of heads of national delegations, two joint sessions, and a number of side events. The general committees will meet on

22 February to hear from independent experts and representatives of the OSCE's governmental side, and discuss presentations from committee rapporteurs on their ideas and intentions regarding reports being prepared for the 31st Annual Session in Bucharest this summer.

In addition, OSCE parliamentarians will hold special debates on various themes in the OSCE's three dimensions of security. The First Committee's special debate, being held under the theme "OSCE work in Ukraine during Russia's War of Aggression," is expected to be introduced by Ambassador Marcel Peško, Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office – Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. The Second Committee will hold a debate on "Artificial Intelligence: A Technological Breakthrough with Security Implications," with keynote addresses by representatives of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Microsoft, and Thinkers.ai. The Third Committee will debate "Political Dissidents and Political Prisoners," with introductory remarks by exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and OSCE PA Special Representative on Political Prisoners Steve Cohen (United States).

The meeting will conclude on Friday with a debate in a joint session on "European Security Today and Tomorrow: Parliamentary Perspectives on the Future of the OSCE."

Winter Meeting on the OSCE PA Events app

The OSCE PA 23rd Winter Meeting is now available on the OSCE PA Events app, available to download at the Apple Store here, <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/osce-pa-events/id1666341309>, and Google Play here <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.oscepa.ahapp>.

OSCE PA Young Parliamentarians meet in Vienna, visit OSCE training centre



The Network of Young Parliamentarians meets in Vienna, 21 February 2024

Hosted by Austrian parliamentarian David Stögmüller, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Network of Young Parliamentarians is meeting this week in Vienna. Thirty participants, including 19 members of parliament, are participating in the two-day

event. Taking place on the eve of the 23rd Winter Meeting, the activities include a discussion of the workshop project "Youth Perspectives on the Future of International Relations," chaired by Aleksander Stokkebø (Norway), and a visit to an OSCE training base at the Austrian Armed Forces International Centre (AUTINT) outside of Vienna.

Welcoming the OSCE parliamentarians today, the Commanding Officer of AUTINT, Colonel Karl Wolf, explained the work that is done at the centre to increase the capacity of the OSCE in a range of areas. He briefed the MPs on AUTINT's training course with a focus on practical mine awareness.

Special Representatives meet with civil society, MPs and government officials

OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) met Tuesday with Hungarian civil society organizations (CSOs) in Budapest to discuss gender equality, gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ challenges. The meeting served as an opportunity to raise awareness of PA mechanisms for promoting gender equality in the work of national parliaments and to learn about the work of CSOs in Hungary. The open and informal discussion covered topics related to the rights of women, with a particular focus on women who are refugees or displaced persons, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the CSOs to share their first-hand impressions about gender issues in the country, discuss challenges encountered in their daily work, and establish a channel of communication with the Special Representative.

On 18 February, Special Representative on Combatting Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin (United States) concluded a three-day visit to Paris and Munich, where he held meetings with various stakeholders, including parliamentarians, government officials, and interfaith leaders. In Paris, Cardin met with Head of France's OSCE PA Delegation Didier Paris and other legislators, US Ambassador Denise Campbell Bauer, and religious leaders to encourage collective efforts to combat antisemitism and other forms of hate and religious discrimination, including anti-Muslim bias.

At the Munich Security Forum and a Shabbat dinner organized by the World Jewish Congress, Cardin underscored the principles of OSCE's Berlin Declaration of 2004, which recognized antisemitism as a threat to the OSCE region.

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