

## Counterterrorism in focus during OSCE PA delegation's visit to Washington



CCT delegation at the State Department, Washington, 19 May

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) and Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) Chair Kamil Aydin (Türkiye) are leading a delegation of several CCT members this week to the United States, for a series of meetings with government officials, members of Congress, and experts to discuss the latest terrorism trends and to explore avenues for developing deeper international co-operation in the fight against violent extremism.

Hosted by CCT Vice-Chair Marc Veasey (United States), the OSCE PA delegation met in Washington on Monday and Tuesday with members of both the Senate and the House, representing both parties, including members of the House Perma-

nent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission).

Extensive meetings were also held with representatives of the National Counterterrorism Center, the Council on Foreign Relations, the U.S. State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau, and the Treasury Department's Office of Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes.

On Tuesday, the delegation visited the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial to pay tribute to the 184 people who died in the attack on Washington, DC, on 11 September 2001.

Discussions focused on the various manifestations of terrorism and violent extremism, how they have evolved, and the priority areas of engagement today. Key topics discussed included the misuse of emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, youth online radicalization to violent extremism, the emergence of so-called nihilistic violent extremist movements, and the nexus between terrorism and organized crime.

The CCT's visit continues in New York with meetings at the United Nations Headquarters, the New York Police Department Counterterrorism Bureau, and the 9/11 World Trade Center Memorial.

## New video published: Young Parliamentarians on election observation

During the recent election observation mission to Albania, several members of the OSCE PA's Network of Young Parliamentarians described how election observation works and why it's important.

Watch the video on YouTube here: <https://bit.ly/3FbQcRe>

## Competitive Romanian presidential run-off marred by hostile rhetoric: observers

In the strongly-contested second round of Romania's repeat presidential election, fundamental freedoms of assembly and association were respected but defamatory rhetoric, biased media, and persistent inauthentic behaviour online limited voters' opportunity to make an informed choice, observers said in a statement on Monday. The joint mission from the PA and ODIHR found that technical preparations for the second round were professional and efficient, but the rules were ambiguous, which sometimes led to inconsistent interpretation. Election day was generally calm, well-organized, and professionally conducted, while accessibility challenges persisted.

"We welcome the authorities' notable efforts to combat misinformation and online abuse," said OSCE Special Co-ordinator Lucie Potůčková. "Nevertheless, these elections have highlighted the need for continued work on the complex electoral framework, in accordance with OSCE commitments and international standards."

The period between the first round and the start of the second-round campaign was not regulated. In practice, candidates



OSCE PA limited election observation mission in Bucharest

and political parties resumed campaigning immediately, with political materials lacking official labelling and broadcasters airing unmarked election-related content. The limited news coverage of the campaign and the lack of meaningful political discussion had a negative effect on voters' ability to make an informed choice, observers said.

The international election observation to the second round of the presidential election in Romania totalled 44 observers from 19 countries, composed of 37 ODIHR-deployed experts and long-term observers, led by Eoghan Murphy, and seven parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA.

## Kauma and Ödebrink highlight deported Ukrainian children at Helsinki conference

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) and Third Committee Rapporteur Carina Ödebrink (Sweden) participated last week in a conference at the Finnish Parliament organized by PACE on the deported children of Ukraine. In her remarks, Kauma stressed the importance of keeping the issue of the Ukrainian children high on the agenda in parliamentary assemblies. The OSCE PA, she said, has responded with urgency and clarity to the issue of deported Ukrainian children, emphasizing that reuniting children with their families must remain a top priority.

Ödebrink took the floor during panel discussions and inquired how the international community, including OSCE PA, should act in the short- and long-term perspective to ensure accountability. On the sidelines of the meeting, Rapporteur Ödebrink met with Miapetra Kumpula-Natri and Olena Khomenko, rapporteur and Chair of the PACE Network for Ukrainian Children, Victoria Litvinova, Acting Prosecutor General of Ukraine and Kateryna Rashevskya, legal expert at the Regional Center for Human Rights.

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