

## Commemorating OSCE's 50th anniversary, PA meets in Porto for 32nd Annual Session



Pia Kauma delivers opening remarks at the Porto Annual Session, 29 June 2025

The OSCE PA's 32nd Annual Session opened Sunday with speeches welcoming this 50th anniversary year of the OSCE as a time to activate the same bold and strategic vision that led to the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Speaking at the opening session, President of the Portuguese Republic Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Parliament José Pedro Aguiar-Branco, OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland), United Nations Secretary General António Guterres, and Head of the OSCE PA's Portuguese Delegation Paula Cardoso noted the enduring importance of dialogue and co-operation.

Speakers recalled the OSCE's five-decade legacy, highlighting its successes in managing post-Cold War upheavals by building security through dialogue and consensus, but regretted that the Russian Federation's full-scale war against Ukraine has cast a shadow over this commemoration.

The war in Ukraine has featured prominently in discussions in Porto, with the three general committee resolutions regretting the massive humanitarian toll and the impacts on broader European security, and reiterating the PA's condemnation of the war and calling for sustained support for Ukraine. The PA has also approved an array of supplementary items dealing with issues including reproductive health, child trafficking and sexual exploitation, climate change, and OSCE institutional co-operation. The committee resolutions and supplementary items will be included in the Final Declaration to be voted on Thursday.

Today in plenary session, parliamentarians will hear addresses by OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu and OSCE/ODIHR Director Maria Telalian, followed by question and answer session. The plenary will also feature a general debate on the situation in the Middle East, as well as a debate on the OSCE 50 years after Helsinki. On Thursday, parliamentarians will hear from Ambassador Jouni Laaksonen, Head of the Finnish OSCE 2025 Chairpersonship Task Force, followed by a Q&A session. Leaders of OSCE PA ad hoc committees will also report to the Assembly, along with OSCE PA Vice-President Luis Graça and Secretary General Roberto Montella. The Annual Session will conclude with the adoption of the Porto Declaration and elections of Assembly officers, including a new President.

### Online resources for the OSCE PA Annual Session

Annual Session-related speeches, written reports, press releases, and op-eds are available at [www.oscepa.org](http://www.oscepa.org). The OSCE PA is also regularly posting updates to its accounts at X, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Photos and videos are available at Flickr and YouTube.

### Standing Committee and Ad Hoc Committees meet for discussions on ongoing work

The Standing Committee met in Porto Sunday and heard reports from OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland), Treasurer Johan Büser (Sweden), and Secretary General Roberto Montella. In his remarks, Büser welcomed the strengthening of the Assembly through increased transparency, openness and accountability. Following his presentation, the Standing Committee approved the budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

During a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, chaired by Vice-President Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), parliamentarians discussed the report on the field visit to Spain and key priorities for 2025-26. Special attention was paid to combat-

ting trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling, as well as vulnerable groups. The Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, chaired by Kamil Aydın (Türkiye), met to hear a presentation on the Portuguese experience in counter-terrorism, with a focus on intelligence-gathering. Members also discussed their recent visit to the United States and the supplementary item on youth radicalization.

The Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine also met Monday and heard reports by Special Rapporteurs Carina Ödebrink (Sweden), Lucie Potuckova (Czechia), and Mati Raidma (Estonia). In addition, the OSCE PA Network of Young Parliamentarians met to discuss ongoing activities.

### Porto side events tackle gender issues, demographic decline, human trafficking, and more

The Russian Federation's full-scale war against Ukraine has been the subject of a number of side events in Porto, with discussions tackling its impact on youth and the role of young people in the rebuilding and formation of resilience in the country. Another event, featuring the participation of OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Kari Johnstone, addressed the threat of human trafficking among Ukrainian refugees, while another focused countering propaganda related to the war.

On Monday, the annual Gender Lunch, co-organized by OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) and the PA's Head of Portuguese Delegation Paula Cardoso, discussed sexual and reproductive health and rights. A side event entitled "Demographic Winter," hosted by Special Representative on Demographic Change and Security Gudrun Kugler (Austria), focused attention on the subject of demographic decline in the OSCE area. A side event Wednesday



tackles the issue of the digitalization of election campaigns and how international election observers must consider campaign conduct through social networks as an electoral tool.

The Delegation of Turkmenistan hosted a side event on empowering multilateralism for a secure and sustainable future, while the Portuguese and Finnish OSCE PA Delegations organized an exhibit in Porto entitled "Helsinki: The Final Act, photos to remember" and a screening of the documentary film "The Helsinki Effect" to celebrate the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and the upcoming 50th anniversary of the OSCE.

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