



OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia
Vice-President Pia Kauma
Report to the Bureau

(Copenhagen, 4 April 2022)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Dear President

Esteemed Colleagues,

Thank you for this opportunity to briefly report to you on my ongoing activities in my capacity as Special Representative on Central Asia.

It was a pleasure to see many of you at our Winter Meeting last February in Vienna, even though our meeting was dominated by the shocking news of the invasion of Ukraine. I had been particularly looking forward to meeting in person with a number of members from Central Asia but these in person meetings unfortunately did not materialise due to last minute cancellations.

I would like to congratulate Vice-President Askar Shakirov for an excellent web dialogue on 2 March on “Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the OSCE region: a parliamentary perspective” which was organized within the framework of the OSCE PA Call for Action – Helsinki +50 initiative. **Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals** is taken very seriously in Central Asia. As mentioned by Vice-President Shakirov, Kazakhstan is hosting a centre devoted to sustainable development in the city of Almaty. Uzbekistan, too, has placed this topic high on the agenda, as we heard from my dear colleague Ms. Tanzila Narbaeva, Chair of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan. The positive impact of SDG implementation is already being seen in many areas such as the protection of human rights, the rule of law, women’s rights as well as the environment.

As I mentioned in my intervention during the web dialogue, one of the most concerning effects of climate change is on water supplies. Climate change can also ultimately cause people to leave their homes and become climate refugees. As Special Representative on Central Asia I follow developments in these countries with great concern. I highlighted in particular SDG 7 which concerns **energy security** which is an important issue for a region with rich but uneven distribution of fossil fuels and water resources. The war in Ukraine has heightened concerns regarding over-reliance on fossil fuels.

In Vienna I reported briefly on my participation in the high-level PA visit to **Uzbekistan** and **Tajikistan** last October.

Later this month, I will travel to **Kyrgyzstan** to meet the new delegation which was constituted after the November elections and discuss ongoing political reforms and their impact on parliamentarism in the country. While in Bishkek I plan to also visit the OSCE Academy, a centre of excellence with which the OSCE PA has an agreement to take in recent graduates as part of the International Research Assistants' Programme.

I will then continue on to Almaty and Nur-Sultan in **Kazakhstan**, as invited by Vice-President Shakirov, to learn more about the reforms announced by President Tokayev. I also look forward to hearing more about the official investigation into the January events and what steps may have been taken to ensure that the persons responsible for unlawful killings, excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions and other human rights violations are brought to justice.

I have requested high-level meetings in both countries, and also intend to meet with a broad range of civil society representatives in both countries. I will also of course visit our OSCE Field Operations.

As time is running out before the Annual Session and logistical challenges persist, an official in-person visit to **Turkmenistan** and **Mongolia** seem unlikely. However, I hope to find other opportunities to engage with the respective Heads of Delegation, Mejlis Chairperson Gulshat Mammedova and Mr. Damdin Tsogtbaatar.

Having just returned from Hungary, I wish to also underline how encouraging it is to see that, for the first time, a member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia has participated in one of our election observation missions. I hope that this has been a positive experience and that we will continue to see MPs from Mongolia and Central Asia take part in our election observation missions as well as other activities.

Concluding Remarks

While our eyes and hearts are understandably turned towards the human suffering caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, let us not forget **Afghanistan** which continues to face a humanitarian catastrophe. The spillover effects of an economic collapse of Afghanistan will be felt far beyond Central Asia. As noted recently by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, the international community cannot afford to neglect Afghanistan.

I look forward to reporting to you again at our Annual Session in Birmingham in July.

Upcoming activities

- 20-22 April: Official visit to **Kyrgyzstan** (Bishkek).
- 23-26 April: Official visit to **Kazakhstan** (Almaty, Nur-Sultan).

Annex I



Ms. Pia Kauma (Finland), Vice-President of the OSCE PA and Member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, was appointed Special Representative on Central Asia on 16 August 2021 by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt. Her mandate expires at the next Annual Session in Birmingham in July 2022. Vice-President Kauma previously served as Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement from August 2019 until July 2021.

Mandate:

- Encourage active participation by parliamentarians from Central Asian OSCE participating States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Mongolia in the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to strengthen parliamentarism in the region;
- Liaise and support the work of the OSCE field missions in the region, as well as relevant OSCE institutions, international and regional organizations and diplomatic missions;
- Encourage closer contacts between the parliaments in the region to promote greater intra-regional cooperation in all three OSCE dimensions;
- Report to the President of the Assembly on developments in the region, including opportunities for enhanced parliamentary dialogue and further inter-parliamentary co-operation among the Central Asian OSCE participating States and Mongolia.

Annex II: Overview of main initiatives/activities

- 25 August 2021 (online): Meeting of PA President Cederfelt and PA Special Representative on Central Asia Kauma with the Heads of Delegation of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and Vice-President Askar Shakirov on impact of recent developments in Afghanistan on the neighbouring OSCE participating States of Central Asia, and potential contribution of the OSCE and its PA to address challenges and concerns. The OSCE field presences in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the OSCE Secretary General's office were also represented.
- 27 August 2021 (Helsinki): Meeting with OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid and OSCE CPC Director Tuula Yrjölä.
- 13-15 October 2021 (St. Petersburg): participation in the Third Eurasian Women's Forum, including an intervention in the opening plenary session as well as bilateral meetings with representatives of parliaments and international organizations, including former Speaker of the Parliament of Moldova, Zinaida Greceanii; Chairperson of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, Tanzila Narbaeva; Chairperson of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Natalia Kochanova; and Natali German, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Central Asia and Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. Vice-President Kauma also exchanged with Speaker of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation and CIS IPA President Matvienko on the margins of the forum, as well as Deputy Speaker Konstantin Kosachev.
- 24 October 2021 (Tashkent): EOM to Uzbekistan for the 24 October Presidential Election
- 25-26 October 2021 (Tashkent): High-level visit to Uzbekistan together with President Cederfelt and Secretary General Montella, including meetings with Tanzila Narbayeva, Chair of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis; Nurdinjon Ismoilov, Chair of the Legislative Assembly of the Oliy Majlis; Mr. Gairat Fazilov, Deputy MFA of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Mr. Sadik Safoev, First Deputy Chairperson of the Senate and Head of the Delegation of Uzbekistan to the OSCE PA, and members of the PA delegation; Amb. Pierre Von Arx, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, as well as representatives of the international community and civil society.
- 27-29 October 2021 (Dushanbe, Vahdat, Obi-Kiik): High-level visit to Tajikistan, including meetings with Mahmadoir Zokirzoda, Chairman of the Assembly of Representatives of the Supreme Assembly (*Majlisi Oli*) of the Republic of Tajikistan; Mr. Saidmurod Fattohzoda, Head of the Delegation of Tajikistan to the OSCE PA and members of the PA delegation; Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin, MFA, as well as representatives of the international community and civil society. Visit to the OSCE Border Management Staff College field visit to a youth center in Vahdat, a painting workshop for refugees and a Women's Resource Centre in Obi-Kiik.
- 28 November 2021 (Bishkek): EOM to Kyrgyzstan for the 28 November Parliamentary Elections
- 6 January 2022: statement regarding developments in Kazakhstan: [OSCE PA leaders urge peaceful resolution of unrest in Kazakhstan](#)
- 4 February 2022 (online): Participation in the OSCE PA Parliamentary Web Dialogue "The Clean Energy Revolution and its Implications for the OSCE region"
- 17 February 2022 (online): Meeting with representatives of Human Rights Watch and Open Dialog Foundation regarding the January events in Kazakhstan.

- 24-25 February 2022 (Vienna): Participation in the 21st OSCE PA Winter Meeting, including report to the Standing Committee on 25 February.
- 2 March (online): Participation in the PA web dialogue “Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the OSCE region: a parliamentary perspective” organized within the framework of the OSCE PA Call for Action – Helsinki +50 initiative.