

Zoffili has visited the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border with the OSCE PA President: 'We have to block the drugs and illegal trafficking route to Europe'

Mr Eugenio Zoffili, President of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Special Representative on Combating Organised Crime took part in the OSCE mission to Tajikistan from 28 April to 1 May 2025, headed by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Pia Kauma.

The border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is not only the territorial boundary separating two states, but is also one of the main routes along which drugs, arms and human beings are trafficked to Europe. That border also demarcates the OSCE's region of responsibility.

The delegation of fifteen parliamentarians from fourteen countries, held a series of official meetings and conducted field visits to gain a better understanding of the remit and the activities of the OSCE Office in Dushanbe (POiD). During the mission, the delegates had meetings with representatives of the Government, Parliament, the international community and local civil society.

On 28 April, they held a fruitful meeting with Tatiana Turcan, the official in charge of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, accompanied by the Heads of Department, who explained the Office's main activities. Afterwards, the delegation visited the Border Management Staff College (BMSC), a training institute for police officers from the 57 OSCE countries, which is also financially supported by Italy. The BMSC is a centre of excellence for training and exchanging border management and security best practices, and the delegation was welcomed by its Director, Elizabeth Lahiff.

In the days that followed, further meetings were held with important parliamentarians and members of the government, including Shermuhammad Shohiyon, First Deputy Speaker of the Majlisi Milli National Assembly (Lower House), other members of the Assembly as well as the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, Sirodjiddin Muhriddin. They also visited the Regional Explosive Hazards Training Centre, a facility which, thanks to the high calibre of the training given to bomb disposal experts, supports the OSCE countries of Central Asia to manage risks from mines and weapons of war.

The mission also included discussions with representatives of Tajik civil society and the embassies in the territory. On Wednesday, the delegation travelled to the Nizhniy Pyanj crossing point on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, where the Commander of the Border Troops, Major General Rajabzoda Murodali Rajab, explained the main challenges and threats to regional security relating to border issues, as well as the strategies adopted to counter them.

This demonstrated the importance of enhancing the OSCE's activities in this crucial area to ensure security and law and order. The mission provided an important opportunity for in-depth analysis and discussion, enabling the OSCE mission in Dushanbe to evaluate its work in the fight against terrorism, international drug trafficking and the protection of human rights.

Tajikistan, due to its strategic location on the border with Afghanistan, is the first security bulwark against drug trafficking, as the starting point that then branches out to the European region and, consequently, to Italy. The fight against human traffickers, who also exploit women and children, is not only a commitment to civilisation, but above all an essential means of protecting European countries against the threats of international terrorism.

Finally, MP Zoffili emphasised the need for a united effort by the international community to stop this trafficking and prevent it from reaching Europe, by upgrading the fight against all forms of organised crime, and investing in protecting these strategic areas.