

OSCE PA issues joint statement with partners on role of parliaments in COVID-19 pandemic



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'OTAN



In a joint statement issued Thursday, the Presidents of the OSCE PA, NATO PA and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, expressed their concern over the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the threat it poses to human health, its devastating effects on societies, democracies and fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the world economy. "This global crisis requires a global response," Presidents George Tsereteli (OSCE PA), Rik Daems (PACE), and Attila Mesterhazy (NATO PA) stated.

Expressing support for the families of those who have lost loved ones, those who are fighting the disease, and those whose livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic, the Presidents also extended appreciation to all medical professionals, scientists and researchers, and security and military personnel, who are working tirelessly on the frontline of the COVID-19 response. "We are also grateful to the essential workers ensuring the good functioning of our societies and economies in a challenging environment," they stressed.

"International co-operation is key to addressing this grave multifaceted crisis," they stated. "We welcome the many forms of assistance and solidarity between our nations which have helped save lives. More efforts are however needed because no state alone can cope with the magnitude of the crisis and its consequences. Everyone is affected, but there are some persons more vulnerable than others, including those affected by conflict or living in refugee camps, who have to be given safe access to medical care."

The parliamentary leaders emphasized the importance of rapidly and safely developing treatments and a vaccine to

bring this pandemic to an end, and the need for co-operation between stakeholders in the scientific community and pharmaceutical industries.

"By working together, including through relevant multilateral organizations, our governments, parliaments, and central banks can help reduce the economic and social fallout of COVID-19 and the long-term impact of the crisis, particularly on vulnerable and marginalized groups," the Presidents said.

They stressed that close co-ordination with parliaments at national and international levels is also necessary. "Parliaments play an essential role as guardians of democratic values, processes and fundamental freedoms, as well as help enhance public confidence," the Presidents stated. "It is therefore important that they have continued to function throughout this crisis, passing unprecedented economic aid packages and emergency public health measures, while attempting to ensure democratic controls and securing effective checks and balances where possible."

The statement also stressed that parliaments will have a key role to play to ensure that emergency measures are implemented properly and in accordance with democratic standards, that restrictions on freedoms are proportionate and temporary, that economic relief funds are disbursed where they are needed, and that security and stability are upheld.

"Our organizations stand ready to support national parliaments in these efforts," concluded the statement. "Through parliamentary diplomacy, we can encourage further assistance and co-ordination between our countries."

Read the full statement at www.oscepa.org.

Second COVID-19 infographic published

The OSCE PA has published a new infographic entitled "COVID-19: Overview of OSCE participating States' responses." The publication contains updated charts and explanatory analysis pertaining to both weekly global trends and a more focused review of social distancing measures. You can find the infographic at www.oscepa.org or on the PA's Twitter feed.

OSCE PA and PACE members press for urgent action on relocating child refugees

In a letter this week, OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration member Alf Dubs (United Kingdom) and Alexander Dundee, Chair of the PACE Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Children, appealed to parliamentarians to back a programme for financing relocation flights for child refugees. Margareta Cederfelt, Acting Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, welcomed the appeal and reiterated the need for co-operation and support for the most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Wednesday, a first group of 12 unaccompanied migrant children left from Greece for Luxembourg and a number of other countries have also stepped forward.



OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration member Alf Dubs