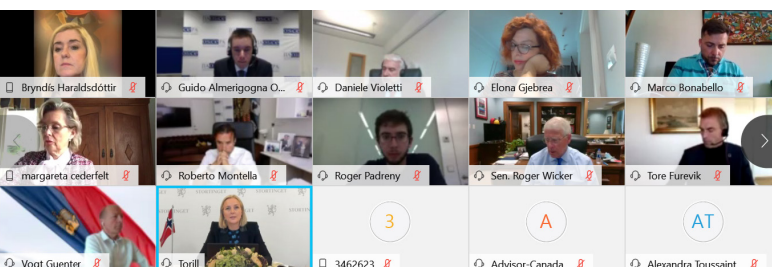


PA holds webinar on role of parliamentarians in addressing climate change



The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's webinar today, entitled "From the Arctic to Global: The Political Role in addressing Climate Change," featured the participation of some 50 parliamentarians and experts for a discussion on the effects of climate change on the Arctic and beyond. The PA's Special Representative on Arctic Issues Torill Eidsheim (Norway) opened the event, followed by keynote addresses by the Arctic Council's Adalheidur

Thorsteinsdottir, the UN's Daniele Violetti, and Prof. Tore Furevik, Director of the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research.

"Climate change is a global issue, and, as such, it requires decisive – and urgent – global answers," said Eidsheim in her introductory remarks. "Alone, we are not able to solve it, not in the Arctic and not anywhere else. We need a spirit of co-operation, solidarity, and joint responsibility for the future of our planet."

Second Committee Rapporteur Elona Gjebrea (Albania) and Secretary General Roberto Montella also addressed the webinar, noting the central importance of the issue and parliamentarians' role in enhancing commitments from governments.

Moderated by Guido Almerigogna from the OSCE PA International Secretariat, the webinar aimed to enhance the knowledge on climate change and its impact on people's lives. Participants stressed the need to increase the sense of urgency among governments in mitigating this threat.

PA President and SG meet with Danish Foreign Minister for discussions on Belarus and the OSCE

The situation in Belarus and ways to revitalize the OSCE through deeper political engagement were among the topics of discussion in meetings last week at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen. Meeting on 10 September with Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod, PA President George Tsereteli and Secretary General Roberto Montella expressed appreciation for Denmark's hosting of the PA's headquarters and its longstanding support for advancing the OSCE's principles and values.

Kofod, who once served as Head of the Danish Delegation to the OSCE PA, expressed full support for the mission of the Organization. On the topic of Belarus, Kofod expressed support for the efforts by the OSCE's Albanian Chairmanship and incoming Swedish Chairmanship in trying to reach out to Belarusian authorities, noting that the OSCE has the mandate and capacities to mediate the crisis. Denmark has also supported calls of the EU for new elections in Belarus, Minister Kofod said.



George Tsereteli and Roberto Montella meet with Jeppe Kofod, 10 Sept.

President Tsereteli said that the OSCE needs to firmly defend democratic values and signal that violations will not be tolerated, Tsereteli said. Secretary General Montella stressed that the OSCE is the most well equipped in dealing with the situation in Belarus, having the clearest mandate and political capital in this regard.

Tsereteli and Montella also held a meeting with Lars Bo Moller, Director of the Department for European Neighbourhood at the Foreign Ministry, during which the current situation in Belarus was discussed in detail.

Chair Lopatka addresses OSCE counter-terrorism conference, meets with Chairmanship

Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) Reinhold Lopatka addressed the 2020 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference in Vienna on Monday, stressing that parliamentarians play a crucial role in promoting international co-operation and championing a whole-of-society approach in preventing terrorism including during the pandemic.

"International co-operation in addressing terrorism is and must remain vital," said Lopatka. "I am confident that there is simply no other way to effectively tackle this threat which, one way or another, affects all our countries."

Lopatka addressed the event following a meeting on the



Reinhold Lopatka meets with Igli Hasani, 14 Sept. 2020

margins with Amb. Igli Hasani, representing the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship. In the meeting, the sides reiterated the focus on strengthening effective partnerships against terrorism and exploring opportunities to further enhance co-operation.

PA leaders discuss Belarus situation with Belarusian Head of Delegation Savinykh

In an online forum on 10 September with Andrei Savinykh, Head of the Belarusian Delegation to the OSCE PA, President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and a number of Assembly leaders discussed the way forward for Belarus. President Tsereteli stressed that the situation regarding detained or exiled members of the Coordination Council is alarming. Savinykh summarized the situation, offered his views on the election results, and highlighted the need to update legislation.

Ditmir Bushati (Albania) commented on the protests in Belarus, stressing that the voices and opinions of demonstra-

tors should be heard. Third Committee Chair Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) inquired about the situation with people in detention centers referring to the reports about torture and missing persons. Third Committee Rapporteur Kari Henriksen (Norway) highlighted reports about violations of freedom of the media and detention of journalists.

Savinykh said that Belarus would appreciate the support and advice of international organizations on legislative reforms. Secretary General Roberto Montella stressed that there are no double standards or hidden agendas in the OSCE PA.