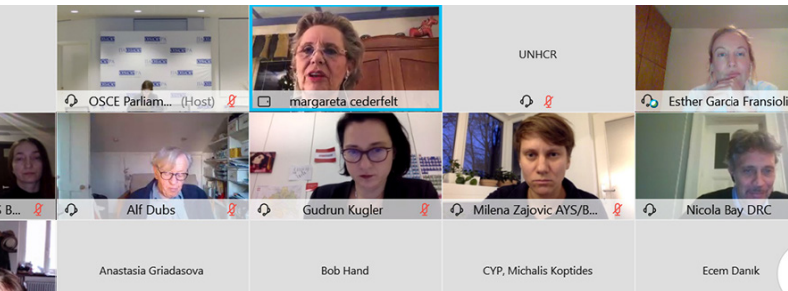


Ad Hoc Committee on Migration members discuss situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Participants discussed the migratory situation in the country, warning of an impending humanitarian crisis due to the planned closure of another reception facility without alternative accommodation plans, even as winter is setting in. Other issues raised included specific protection needs of unaccompanied minors, obstacles in accessing the asylum system, border violence and “pushbacks,” and ongoing work in state capacity building and identifying victims of human trafficking.

Ad Hoc Committee members expressed concerns about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated tensions and hostility towards migrants. They underlined the importance of reinforcing accountability through the establishment of a credible and effective monitoring mechanism with the participation of national human rights institutions as well as civil society to trigger concrete action.

Cederfelt also noted that the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration is planning a field visit to BiH as soon as the conditions permit to hold consultations with a broad range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and to see the situation on the ground.

Chaired by Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration met on 17 December to focus on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The online meeting included briefings by representatives of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN High Commissioner on Refugees representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Danish Refugee Council, and NGOs “SOS Balkanroute” and “Are You Syrious,” a member of the Border Violence Monitoring Network.

Special Representative Lopatka holds meeting with Central Asian Ambassadors in Vienna

Recently appointed OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) held his first meeting with Central Asian OSCE Ambassador on 17 December. Hosted by Kazakhstan’s Ambassador Kairat Umarov, the meeting focused on the importance of the Central Asian region for security in the broader OSCE area, especially regarding counterterrorism. Other topics of discussion included future parliamentary co-operation and the readiness of Central Asian parliamentarians to participate in PA activities.



Discussions at International Secretariat focus on PA’s co-operation with Albanian Chairmanship



Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania Cakaj Gent visited the OSCE PA’s International Secretariat last week for a meeting with Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and other staff members. The meeting on 17 December took stock of Albania’s successful 2020 OSCE Chairmanship, highlighted the excellent co-operation between the PA and Chairmanship throughout the year, and focused attention on regional issues.

Season’s Greetings from the Secretary General

“At the close of a challenging year, I would like to offer a message of hope and thanks to everyone in the OSCE PA family – including dedicated Members of Parliament, Staff of Delegations and the International Secretariat.

If there is any lesson we have learned in this 2020 *annus horribilis*, it is that the answers to our challenges can only come from international co-operation. Multilateralism needs to be reinforced, and this is my call to each one of you, in your own countries: invest in it. With our humble work, we stand here to facilitate this and support you.

As you know, on 31 December 2020 my first mandate as Secretary General will come to an end, and on 1 January 2021 the second five-year term will start, following last year’s re-election by the Standing Committee. I am grateful for the trust given to me and I am as committed and dedicated as ever to continue working hard for our Assembly, the values it upholds and the objectives it aims at reaching.

Global events shape our work, as it is in the DNA of the international community to be flexible and adapt its action to what is happening in the world. Numerous crises and challenges have beset the international community since I became Secretary General, as well as a growing polarization of East-West relations. And now the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic is radically changing our way of operating and, to a certain extent, of living.

I will describe how we have readapted the work of the Assembly to maintain its relevance amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in a detailed report I will prepare for the OSCE PA Winter Meeting in February.

For now, dear friends, let me thank you once again for your continued support, your friendship and commitment to OSCE values. I wish you all a beautiful holiday period and a happy 2021 full of health, happiness and success. I look forward to seeing you all in person soon again.” - Roberto Montella