OSCE's current state of affairs of in focus at Heads of Institutions retreat in Denmark

Upon invitation by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, the five OSCE Heads of Institution met for a two-day retreat in Helsingør, Denmark, on 31 May and 1 June. Participants included OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci, RFoM Teresa Ribeiro, and HCNM Kairat Abdrakhmanov, as well as senior staff.

In his opening remarks, President Bowness welcomed the institutional co-operation that has been facilitated by the engagement of former leaders of the OSCE PA who sit on the AFET, and provided an overview of the Assembly’s work for those less familiar with the PA. He highlighted in particular fact-finding visits, election observation and conflict mediation as areas of common interest between the EP and OSCE PA.

In response to questions on issues such as transatlantic relations, challenges facing Eastern Europe and election observation, Bowness stressed the importance of building inter-parliamentary co-operation, in particular between EU and OSCE, but said that what is ultimately needed is stronger engagement from governments. He noted that on election observation, follow-up is needed to ensure adherence to democratic commitments.

Montella said that the PA is working to strengthen the OSCE in order to better deliver to its end users. He also appealed to the EP to refrain from creating a new election observation institution but advocated a policy aiming at strengthening the ODIHR, and building co-operation within its established methodology.

OSCE parliamentarians discuss importance of involving youth in decision-making and human rights. OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella also spoke at the opening, emphasizing his view that there are two central issues at stake: empowering youth and realizing youth visions. We need the first to achieve the second, Montella said, offering assurances that the PA is committed to achieving this end.

The discussion focused on how to set priorities for the agenda of the OSCE with the role of youth centered in its work. It was noted that young people need more inclusive representation, including a place at the table in decision-making processes.

PA participates in regional seminar on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

The OSCE PA was represented at an online seminar on 27-28 May on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security by Chief Diplomatic Advisor Miodrag Pančeski who delivered a keynote address on “Democratic oversight and the role of parliaments.” While underlining the Assembly’s work in promoting exchanges on the implementation of the Code, Amb. Pančeski emphasized the OSCE PA’s role in institutionalizing discussions, reminding participants of its unique characteristic, serving as a critical nexus between the OSCE and participating States. “We need both experts and parliamentarians to commit to fostering its full implementation across all its aspects,” he said.

The seminar provided an opportunity to senior representatives of the participating States, academia and civil society, as well as the OSCE executive structures and international organizations, to address the role of parliaments in the democratic control of security forces; women, peace and security; national practices in implementing the Code of Conduct; and the role of youth with a focus on regional security challenges.

Ukrainian Delegation leadership meets with OSCE Secretary General Schmid in Kyiv

OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid met on 30 May with Ukraine’s Head of Delegation to the PA Myktya Poturayev and Deputy Heads Artur Gerasymov and Grygoriy Nemyria. Discussions focused on support for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and the impact of the partial closure of crossing points. The meeting was part of Schmid’s five-day official visit to Ukraine in which she met with a range of political actors.