

PA meeting focuses on situation in Afghanistan and impact on Central Asia



The online meeting on video link at the International Secretariat, 25 August

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) convened an online meeting today with the heads of OSCE PA delegations and representatives of OSCE field offices in the region, as well as other relevant actors such as the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and possible impacts for the region. The discussion focused in particular on border security, refugees, radicalization, transnational crime, and human rights.

Cederfelt was joined by Saidmurod Fattohzoda, Head of the Delegation of Tajikistan to the OSCE PA, and Sadik Safoev, Head of the Delegation of Uzbekistan to the OSCE PA, as well as OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia and Vice-President Pia Kauma (Finland), Special Representative on Sustainable Development Goals and Vice-President Askar Shairov (Kazakhstan), and OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella. They were also joined by representatives of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan.

Special Representative Kauma said that Afghanistan's security will not only affect neighboring countries but also the wider region, and emphasized the importance of keeping focus on the situation of refugees. In his remarks, Shairov stressed the importance of working to build confidence of the Afghan people.

Speaking on behalf of the OSCE PA's Delegation from Tajikistan, Fattohzoda said that restoring peace in Afghanistan would have a positive impact on the region as a whole. Representing Uzbekistan's Delegation to the OSCE PA, Safoev said that the main point of concern at the moment is the refugees, pointing out that Uzbekistan is working with numerous countries to manage humanitarian evacuations and to prevent spillover effect from Afghanistan to neighboring countries.

Representatives of OSCE field operations in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan highlighted the importance of co-ordination and communication in meeting the security challenges in the region. It was emphasized that the Parliamentary Assembly is a good platform for focusing attention on the issue and participants expressed the desire to maintain close co-ordination and dialogue with the PA. President Cederfelt underlined the PA's appreciation for the work of the OSCE field operations and pledged to help highlight their priorities.

Secretary General Montella noted that the August 31 deadline could represent a major upheaval for the way of life of millions of Afghans, in particular women and girls, and the international community must therefore emphasize the fundamental nature of human rights.

OSCE PA Special Representatives appointed to cover key portfolios

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) has appointed Special Representatives to cover existing portfolios as well as several new ones. The newly appointed Special Representatives include the following:

- OSCE PA Vice-President Pia Kauma (Finland) as Special Representative on Central Asia
- Former OSCE PA Vice-President and Rapporteur of the human rights committee Kari Henriksen (Norway) as Special Representative on the South Caucasus
- OSCE PA Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) as Special Representative on South East Europe
- Bryndis Haraldsdottir (Iceland) as Special Representative on Arctic Issues
- Former Rapporteur and Chair of the Third Committee Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) as Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement

OSCE PA Vice-Presidents Irene Charalambides (Cyprus),

Pascal Allizard (France), and Daniela De Ridder (Germany) have been reappointed, respectively, as Special Representative on Fighting Corruption, Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, and Special Representative on Eastern Europe. Ben Cardin (United States) will continue to serve as Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance. Oscar Mina (San Marino) has been reappointed Special Representative on Disinformation and Propaganda, along with Hedy Fry (Canada) as Special Representative on Gender Issues, and Christopher Smith (United States) as Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues.

The newly created positions include a Special Representative on Sustainable Development Goals, a position that will be filled by PA Vice-President Askar Shairov (Kazakhstan). Farah Karimi (The Netherlands) will serve as Special Representative on Youth Engagement. The OSCE PA's first Special Representative on Elderly Issues will be Paola Taverna (Italy).

OSCE CiO, Norwegian Minister of Culture visit International Secretariat



Ann Linde and Roberto Montella at the International Secretariat on 17 August

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde met in Copenhagen on 17

August for discussions that touched on challenges facing the OSCE, including recent difficulties reaching consensus on the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the cancellation of Russian election observation mission and the OSCE's parliamentary dimension. Discussions also focused on the situation in Belarus and Afghanistan.

Norwegian Minister of Culture and former Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism Abid Raja also visited the International Secretariat last week. He and Secretary General Montella discussed the PA's work on anti-terrorism, as well as the importance of culture and nondiscrimination.