

High-level OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation visits the United States

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt and other high-level PA officials have been in the United States this week, for meetings with UN representatives, as well as discussions with members of the US Delegation to the OSCE PA and governmental representatives. The delegation, composed of the President and OSCE PA Vice-Presidents Pascal Allizard (France), Irene Charalambides (Cyprus), and Secretary General Roberto Montella, met in New York with the UNGA President Chef de Cabinet, Ambassador Nagaraj Kakanur, and Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary A. DiCarlo. They emphasized in both meetings the importance for co-operation and co-ordination of the efforts of international organizations in responding to crises, in particular in Ukraine, but also in the field of Mediterranean Affairs and Combating Corruption.

The visit continued in Washington on Tuesday, with a roundtable with experts on Mediterranean affairs organized by the French Embassy in Washington and a meeting with French Ambassador to the U.S., Philippe Etienne. In remarks at the roundtable, VP Allizard stressed that the US and Europe have a special role to play to promote peace and stability



Pascal Allizard, Irene Charalambides and Margareta Cederfelt in Washington, 29 March 2022

across the OSCE area and throughout the world.

Hosted by the Head of the U.S. Delegation to the PA Steve Cohen and OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin, the Delegation also met with Members and Staff of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, as well as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and participated in a Helsinki Commission hearing entitled “Putin’s War on the Truth: Propaganda and Censorship in Russia.” The visit, which is supported by supported by Freyja Koci and Tim Knoblaug from the OSCE PA International Secretariat, continues with meetings with the National Security Council and the State Department.

Joint PA-ODIHR webinar focuses on ways to achieve gender equality in parliaments

A webinar held jointly with the OSCE/ODIHR today focused on how to realize gender equality in parliaments through the development of institutions and good practices.

In her opening remarks, OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) said that realizing gender equality in parliament starts at the national level. In Sweden, she said, they have achieved gender balance in parliament without quotas, accomplishing it instead through fostering gender equality in society. She noted that gender equality is not only about the numbers of women represented, but also about key positions held in parliament, including leadership roles.

OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) emphasized the need to implement gender sensitivity in all parliaments of the OSCE area. She argued that one obstacle inhibiting women from entering politics is the toxic environment that exist in some parliaments, where

stereotyping and threats against women are all too common. Tools need to be developed to make parliaments safe spaces for women, Dr. Fry said.

Kateryna Ryabiko, ODIHR’s First Deputy Director, reported that the ODIHR is collecting good practices and lessons learned, advancing a holistic approach to promoting gender equality throughout the OSCE participating States. To achieve more gender-sensitive parliaments, ODIHR has produced guidelines that were presented today by Dr. Sonia Palmieri, ODIHR’s International Expert Policy Fellow, Australian National University.

Dr. Palmieri discussed the concept of “gender-sensitive parliaments,” which she explained are parliaments that value and prioritize gender equality as a social, economic and political objective. Gender equality, she stressed, benefits everybody, and in order to achieve it, parliaments need to ensure that gender equality is the subject of mainstream debate.

Lopatka highlights parliamentary engagement on counter-terrorism in Doha

Chair of the OSCE PA’s Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism and Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) has been in Doha this week, attending the Annual Forum of Beneficiaries of Technical Assistance, organized by the UNOCT and Qatar, where he highlighted the PA’s work in strengthening international co-ordination in counter-terrorism matters. Lopatka has underlined the need for parliamentarians to play a role in building counter-terrorism capacity.

Lopatka is also attending the High-Level Parliamentary Con-

ference on Understanding the terrorist threat in Africa convened by the UNOCT, on 30-31 March. This conference is focused on the new challenges and necessary measures presented by the terrorist threat in the African region. Lopatka has highlighted, in particular, the OSCE PA CCT’s efforts to promote global and regional counter terrorism efforts, drawing on the recently published Model Legislative Provisions for Victims of Terrorism, as well as the Web Dialogue on the Clean Energy Revolution and its Implications for the OSCE Region.

Migration Committee meets for discussions on recent and upcoming work

Chaired by OSCE PA Vice-President Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria), the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration met online Monday for discussions of recent activities and to set priorities for upcoming work. The committee debriefed on the fact-finding visit to Greece, held on 20-23 March, the high-level visit to the Poland-Ukraine border on 13-14 March 2022, and discussed preparations for other possible field visits, as well as the 2022 Birmingham Annual Session.

Chair Vigenin reported on the situation in the Aegean islands of Lesbos and Samos, as well as the efforts of Poland to handle the influx of refugees from Ukraine. Emphasis was placed on the need for greater European preparedness in situations of crisis. OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Val Richey reported to the PA members on the need for enhancing anti-trafficking prevention amid mass migration flows.