

OSCE parliamentarians visit Ukraine and meet virtually to discuss war



OSCE PA delegation in Ukraine, 28 June 2022



OSCE PA delegation with Ruslan Stefanchuk in Verkhovna Rada

A delegation of the OSCE PA comprising President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), Chair of the Second Committee Pere Joan Pons (Spain), Special Representative Kari Henriksen (Norway), and Secretary General Roberto Montella visited Ukraine on Monday, supported by Research Assistant Victoria Chumenko.

The delegation met in Kyiv with Speaker of the Ukraine Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mykola Tochytskyi. They visited the surroundings of Kyiv, Irpin and Bucha, cities that have been severely damaged by Russian military forces. The delegation met with the mayors of Irpin and Bucha, who shared the experience of their communities during the war. The delegation was shown the sites of mass graves in Bucha and the severe infrastructure damage in both Irpin and Bucha.

Members of the delegation expressed support and solidarity with Ukraine, thanking in particular the PA's Ukrainian delegation for their dedicated work. They urged a full accounting of alleged war crimes, expressing support for the investigations of the International Criminal Court and other relevant authorities. The delegation also expressed gratitude for the work of the OSCE in the country for many years.

Last week, a virtual meeting was hosted by the OSCE PA, at which experts and parliamentarians expressed support for ending the war, holding accountable those who have committed war crimes, supporting Ukrainian refugees and civilians impacted by the violence, and ensuring that the OSCE plays an effective role in conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Moderated by OSCE PA High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier, the webinar featured the participation of President Cederfelt, Head of Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA Mykyta Poturayev, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre Tuula Yrjölä, and Alexandra Dienes, Senior Researcher at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Regional Office for International Cooperation in Vienna.

Several OSCE parliamentarians took the floor in the 22 June webinar, holding a wide-ranging debate that highlighted the importance of upholding international humanitarian law during warfare. It was recalled that the OSCE was founded on principles of indivisible and comprehensive security outlined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which helped to end the Cold War and avert open conflict between nuclear powers. The priority now must be to revive the spirit of Helsinki, it was stressed, with an emphasis on de-escalation and diplomacy.

OSCE PA 29th Annual Session set to begin in Birmingham

The OSCE PA's 29th Annual Session will take place in Birmingham, United Kingdom, on 2-6 July 2022, streaming live on the OSCE PA's website, www.oscepa.org. Participants are encouraged to download the OSCE PA App for the event at the Apple App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/app/id1463542021> or the Google App Store: <http://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=mobile.appHA-JpL96VBc> Follow the event with the hashtag #OSCEPABirmingham22 on social media.

PA engages with OSCE executive structures, field operations and civil society



Paola Taverna (centre) visiting residential care communities and barrier-free senior citizens' apartments in Hamburg, 28 June

Visiting Germany on Tuesday, OSCE PA Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna (Italy) examined in-person housing modules for elderly citizens and co-operative senior housing facilities. She was accompanied by experts from FORUM, a German national association of people and organizations working on community housing projects. Last week, Taverna spoke with Ukrainian Minister of Social Policy Maryna Lazebna about possible ways of supporting the elderly in the context of the ongoing Russian invasion.

On 24 June, OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on South East Europe Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan)



Michael Georg Link, Helga Schmid, Gesa Braeutigam, 28 June

spoke at the OSCE Regional Meeting of Heads of Field Operations in South-Eastern Europe. Guliyev outlined his recent activities and praised the OSCE for its regional engagement. He will present a comprehensive report on his activities at the OSCE PA Annual Session taking place in Birmingham on 2-6 July.

Ahead of the Annual Session, Third Committee Vice-Chair Michael Georg Link (Germany) met with OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid and German Ambassador to the OSCE Gesa Braeutigam. The sides discussed what can be done by the OSCE to support Ukraine and promote co-operation in the OSCE area.