

Helsinki +50 event urges revitalizing OSCE and capitalizing on its strengths



Finnish Parliament OSCE PA event in Helsinki on 23 September

A seminar held as part of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +50 - Call for Action initiative on 23 September focused on ensuring that the OSCE continue to serve as a unique tool in building bridges across our region, with securing peace in Ukraine highlighted as the organization's top priority. Several members of the OSCE PA Bureau participated in the event, organized by the Parliament of Finland and the OSCE PA, including Vice-Presidents and officers of the General Committees, as well as a number of Special Representatives.

In an opening address, Pia Kauma, OSCE PA Vice-President and Member of the Finnish OSCE PA Delegation, described the goal of the seminar as producing practical views and recommendations, noting the growing urgency to think collaboratively about the direction that the European security structure is taking ahead of the OSCE's 50th anniversary in 2025.

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt delivered opening remarks, recalling that 47 years ago, the founding document of the OSCE was signed in Helsinki. "Today," she said, "the spectrum of instabilities seems unmatched since the fall of communism." She stressed in particular the need for strengthened multilateralism in this difficult time.

Other speakers at the event included Matti Vanhanen, Speaker of the Parliament of Finland; Erik Lundberg of the Foreign Ministry of Finland; Vilhelm Junnila, Head of the Finnish OSCE PA Delegation; Tuula Yrjölä, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE; Roberto Montella, Secretary General of the OSCE PA; and Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, a former OSCE Secretary General and current OSCE PA High-Level Expert.

Panel discussions featured remarks by academics and OSCE officials. Participants discussed how to preserve and further capitalize on the OSCE's strengths, as well as the main impediments for the organization to meet its full potential in the changed international environment. Offering ideas on what can be done to reform the elements hindering the organization to play an effective role in the current context, participants stressed the need to revitalize the OSCE, with a particular focus on the role of parliamentarians.

Finland's digital transformation in focus during Special Rep Mihail's Helsinki visit

In Helsinki, the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Digital Agenda, Romanian Senator Radu-Mihai Mihail, met on 22 September with representatives of Finland's Digital and Population Data Service Agency, the Public Sector ICT Department of the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

Discussions focused on Finland's digitalization process, including the government's current agenda and future challenges. Mihail discussed with interlocutors Finland's successful digital transformation over recent years and the government's programmes to increase the technological and digitalization capabilities of the public and private sectors. Discussions focused

on how Finland became in 2022 the most digital country in the EU, according to the European Commission. Advanced digital skills of its citizens, integration of digital technology and improved digital public services were revealed as the driving forces for the country's progress.

Discussions also focused on the impact of digitalization on the economic development of the country which has made Finland attractive for large foreign investments, as well as other OSCE countries' experience in these fields. Exchanges touched upon cybersecurity policies and on the advanced Artificial Intelligence programme that aims for a clean, efficient, and digital Finnish industry in 2030.

OSCE PA deploys observers to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2 October general elections

Some 100 observers from the OSCE PA are deploying to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2 October general elections. The OSCE PA observers will work closely with colleagues from the OSCE/ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Pascal Allizard (France), OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, will serve as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission, following an appointment by the OSCE Chair-

man-in-Office, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Zbigniew Rau. President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) has appointed Irene Charalambides (Cyprus), OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Fighting Corruption, to lead the OSCE PA observer delegation.

Observers will be briefed by election administrators, experts, candidates, political party representatives, media and civil society representatives for two days prior to election day. The post-election statement will be presented at a press conference in Sarajevo on 3 October.

OSCE PA's Padreny and Stögmüller participate in Warsaw Human Dimension Conference

Two members of the OSCE PA's informal network of young parliamentarians participated on Tuesday in the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference's side event "State of Democracy and Youth Political Participation." David Stögmüller (Austria) said that the world has the youngest population ever, with young people increasingly using new, non-conventional means of political participation. The goal should be to find a way to bring young people in the decision-making processes. Discussing the importance of integration of youth perspectives in decision-making processes, Roger Padreny (Andorra)



Warsaw Human Dimension Conference on 27 September

emphasized that the PA's young parliamentarians network serves to co-ordinate and institutionalize new ways of dealing with public policies with a youth perspective.