

## Winter Meeting to proceed as scheduled, President Cederfelt informs Bureau



OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) convened an online meeting of the Bureau on Tuesday to discuss preparations for the 22nd Winter Meeting, taking place 23-24 February in Vienna. With 11 Members connected, the discussion focused primarily on the concerns raised by some OSCE PA Delegations in recent days about the participation of the Russian Federation and ideas that had been floated for postponing the meeting.

President Cederfelt told the Bureau that preparations are continuing for holding the Winter Meeting as scheduled, in accordance with the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. She also explained that she has been consulting with many OSCE PA Delegations and working to ensure the fullest participation possible for the Winter Meeting. The President stressed that it is important for the Assembly to remain united in its condemnation of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and that the Winter Meeting is an important opportunity to ensure that Russian parliamentarians hear the criticisms of the war that they do not hear in Moscow.

President Cederfelt also expressed these views earlier in the day in a meeting with Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) Ruslan Stefanchuk, urging the participation of Ukrainian parliamentarians in Vienna. Several Bureau members noted that the Vienna meeting will provide an important opportunity for Ukrainians to meet with delegates from some 50 different countries that fully support the Ukrainian people and that it is equally important not to forfeit the forum provided by the OSCE PA for open discussion.

In the Bureau meeting, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella reiterated the Assembly's unparalleled track record of supporting Ukraine dating back to 2014. Few organizations have done more than the OSCE PA, he said, to support full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. In the discussion, several Bureau members also expressed their views on the controversies surrounding the Winter Meeting, noting that despite the difficulties it is important to proceed with the meeting. Not only is the Vienna meeting a chance to confront Russia over its war, it was pointed out, but it is also a vital step in the preparation of the reports and draft resolutions that will be presented for debate at this summer's Annual Session in Vancouver.

In a letter distributed to OSCE PA Delegations on Wednesday, President Cederfelt and SG Montella confirmed that the Winter Meeting will take place as planned, noting that "this decision to carry on with our preparations was taken by the President in concertation with the International Secretariat, after consultation of the Bureau."



## 2022 Autumn Meeting report published

Ahead of next week's Winter Meeting, the International Secretariat has published its final report on the 2022 Autumn Meeting, held from 24 to 26 November in Warsaw at Poland's Parliament. Around 200 parliamentarians participated in the Autumn Meeting, which featured high-level speeches from host officials, including Speakers of the Parliament and the Foreign Minister of Poland and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, as well as a Parliamentary Conference comprised of three sessions focused on various themes. To view the report, please click here: <http://bit.ly/3lqaHs3>

## SR Cardin represents PA at OSCE anti-Semitism conference

OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin (United States) participated in the Conference on Addressing Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region, held in Skopje on 6-7 February. Joining by video link, Cardin spoke about his work as Special Representative and the need for OSCE participating States to co-operate in implementing their commitments to address anti-Semitism, including by prosecuting anti-Semitic hate crimes. The Skopje conference marked the 20th anniversary

of the adoption of the landmark 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/03 on Tolerance and Non-discrimination. It focused on addressing anti-Semitic hate crime, identifying challenges and best practices to combat anti-Semitism through a regional perspective and with a focus on the role of youth, as well as the examination of emerging trends and areas of concern, particularly online.

Cardin was appointed the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance in March 2015.

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