

Parliamentarians discuss OSCE's future at Call for Action – Helsinki +50 Meeting

On the eve of the OSCE PA's 22nd Winter Meeting in Vienna, OSCE PA High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier moderated a discussion in the framework of the Call for Action - Helsinki +50 Initiative, addressing a number of fundamental issues that the OSCE is facing amid the ongoing war in Ukraine and ahead of the 50th Anniversary of the OSCE's founding document, the Helsinki Final Act. The event engaged OSCE parliamentarians, signatories of the Call for Action, and representatives of the OSCE governmental side.

Following opening remarks by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and Secretary Roberto Montella who emphasized the crucial role of legislators in preserving and revitalizing the OSCE, three panelists addressed the meeting in hybrid format. Keynote speakers included Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, CEO of Responsible Leadership Academy; Walter Kemp, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime; and Cornelius Friesendorf, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg. The panelists set the scene by providing the scenarios for OSCE survival, caveats, and modus operandi under current circumstances compounded by lack of consensus and constructive dialogue among participating States, funding issues, absence of suspension mechanisms for members violating the rules and lack of sufficient political attention.

Discussion focused on questions of whether the Helsinki principles are still valid today or require adaptation, as well as whether to give the OSCE more "teeth" to ensure or even enforce implementation of commitments by its participating States or introduce penalties or "quarantine measure" for cases of blatant non-compliance with agreed rules. In the discussion, participants



Call for Action - Helsinki +50 meeting in the Hofburg in Vienna, 22 February 2023

underlined the enduring relevance of the Helsinki Decalogue, which has served for nearly five decades as the basis of successful security co-operation in Europe. The question should primarily be whether, participants said, additions are required to ensure that all actors feel that the platform of principles reflects their security perceptions and needs.

To keep the OSCE afloat and most relevant amid current crises, in her closing remarks President Cederfelt encouraged legislators to discuss the challenges the OSCE is going through in their parliaments, while Secretary General Montella underlined the need to mainstream the achievements of the OSCE and make better use for the benefit of its people. Participants put forward a number of suggestions for possible action by parliamentarians to ensure better visibility, sustainability and effectiveness of the OSCE in the current challenging environment.

Op-ed published ahead of OSCE PA Winter Meeting

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) has published an op-ed, "OSCE PA Winter Meeting is a chance to challenge Russians and begin process of accountability," addressing the issue of participation in the Winter Meeting. The article originally appeared at Euronews.com and is available on the OSCE PA's website: bit.ly/3EwzLv4

OSCE PA leadership, young parliamentarian network meet ahead of 22nd Winter Meeting



Margareta Cederfelt chairs a meeting of the Bureau on 22 February 2023

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) opened a meeting of the OSCE PA's Bureau on Wednesday for discussions on the modalities and working procedures for the 22nd Winter Meeting. The Bureau was informed that the participation for the meeting is high, with 247 parliamentarians from 52 delegations expected to participate. President Cederfelt, Secretary General Montella, and Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares explained the logistical challenges for the meeting, underlining the restrictions being implemented to ensure security and the ability



Young parliamentarians network at the Austrian Parliament, 21 February 2023

for parliamentarians to conduct their work.

The OSCE PA's Informal Network of Young Parliamentarians met before the Winter Meeting in the Austrian Parliament, welcomed by OSCE PA Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) and President Cederfelt. The delegation met with Austrian ministers and held working sessions focused on increasing the youth perspective in the OSCE PA. The meetings took place Tuesday and Wednesday and included more than a dozen young parliamentarians.