

Russia's war against Ukraine in focus at well-attended Winter Meeting



A flag of mourning flies at the Hofburg, 24 February 2023

The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine was the focus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 22nd Winter Meeting, which took place in Vienna 23-24 February with nearly 250 parliamentarians from 52 countries in attendance. A top priority of the international community, OSCE parliamentarians said, must be bringing the war to an end in full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and to ensure justice and accountability for war crimes.

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) opened the meeting with a speech noting that for the past year, every principle of the OSCE's founding document, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, has been violated. "As a direct result of Russia's actions, our entire region is spiraling into the unknown," President Cederfelt said.

Also addressing the opening session was President of the Austrian National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, who spoke about the need for a common approach to security, highlighting the war in Ukraine and several other pressing challenges in the OSCE area. Attending a special session of the UN General Assembly in New York to observe the one-year mark of the war in Ukraine, OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Foreign Minister of North Macedonia, Bujar Osmani, addressed the PA in a video message, and Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid was represented by Amb. Luca Fratini.

The OSCE PA's three general committees met for discussions on the political-security aspects, economic and environmental impacts, and human rights implications of the war. Committee Chair Richard Hudson (United States) opened the meeting of the First Committee, which featured remarks by representatives of

the OSCE's governmental side who explained the role, functioning, and contributions of the OSCE one year into the war.

Chair Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) opened the meeting of the Second Committee by noting that the war's economic and environmental impacts are still coming into focus. Rapporteur Gudrun Kugler (Austria) presented her ideas for the report and draft resolution for the 30th Annual Session in Vancouver, noting that the war is a crisis for everyone in Ukraine, but is also felt more broadly throughout the region. The committee heard presentations by representatives of the OSCE, the IAEA and academia, with discussion focusing in particular on ensuring clean and sustainable energy in the OSCE region in the context of the war.

Chair Nikoloz Samkharadze (Georgia) opened the meeting of the Third Committee and Rapporteur Johan Büser (Sweden) presented his ideas for the report and draft resolution to be presented at the Annual Session. The committee heard presentations by OSCE representatives, President of the Appeals Division at the International Criminal Court Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, and Professor Veronika Bílková of Charles University. Judge de Brichambaut, a former Secretary General of the OSCE, and Prof. Bílková noted that under rules of state responsibility, Russia is obligated to prevent war crimes and ensure reparations for victims.

In the closing joint session of the general committees, President Cederfelt announced the adoption of a document by the OSCE PA Bureau, with the Assembly's overwhelming support, entitled "Action on the One-Year Anniversary of Russia's War Against Ukraine and the International Legal Order."

The OSCE PA's Standing Committee, consisting of the heads of national delegations and Bureau members, also met in Vienna to hear reports and discuss internal matters. As a special guest of the President, exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya addressed the Standing Committee, highlighting the movement for democracy in Belarus.

The Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure, chaired by Vice-President Pascal Allizard (France); the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, chaired by Reinhold Lopatka (Austria); and the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, chaired by Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom), met on the margins of the Winter Meeting.

Photos, videos and related documents for the Winter Meeting are available here: <https://bit.ly/3H9ZvOF>

Video published of Helsinki +50 meeting

Video of last week's meeting of the Informal Call for Action - Helsinki +50 initiative, focusing on a number of fundamental questions facing the OSCE, is now available on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3Y91N78>

Dep. Head of Ukrainian Delegation and Second Committee Vice-Chair Gerasymov visits IS



Artur Gerasyimov and Roberto Montella, 1 March 2023

Second Committee Vice-Chair Artur Gerasyimov (Ukraine) visited the International Secretariat in Copenhagen Wednesday for talks with SG Roberto Montella and staff. Coming just days after the Winter Meeting, the discussions focused primarily on the outcome of the meeting and the Assembly's upcoming work, including the Annual Session in Vancouver. Gerasyimov discussed the situation in Ukraine, which is very difficult, and stressed the



importance of continued international support for Kyiv.

Montella recalled the PA's many initiatives in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity dating back to 2014, emphasizing that the PA's work has been unparalleled in this regard. Gerasyimov's three-day visit to Copenhagen continues with additional meetings Thursday featuring participation by other Members of the Ukrainian Delegation.