

OSCE PA Members gather for Leinsweiler Seminar to discuss future of European security



Participants of the sixth Leinsweiler Seminar in Berlin

More than 30 participants – including parliamentarians, scholars, OSCE officials, and representatives of international organizations – gathered in Berlin for the sixth annual Leinsweiler Seminar hosted by the German Delegation to the OSCE PA, with support from the German Foreign Office. This year's seminar, which took place 5-7 May, focused on best practices and lessons learned from the work of OSCE field operations in South East Europe, Moldova, and Ukraine, while also addressing the current challenges and future of the organization.

Robin Wagener, Head of the German Delegation to the OSCE PA, opened the event by noting the range of complex security challenges being faced today and stressing the importance of exchanging ideas and working together to support the OSCE's mission of comprehensive security. OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) further emphasized the importance to use informal exchanges amongst parliamentarians and platforms such as the OSCE PA to discuss critical issues, including the impact of the war in Ukraine on the OSCE region, and chart a path forward for European security.

The seminar's discussions highlighted the vital support OSCE field operations are providing to national authorities, civil society, and other actors in participating States concerning law enforcement, judicial reform, media freedom, and other areas. With the increased security threats across the OSCE region, strengthening domestic capacities in participating States through field operations is of utmost importance, participants stressed, while



Robin Wagener addresses colleagues, 6 May

also noting that the lack of consensus regarding processes such as approving a unified budget, appointing senior officials, or adopting agendas of meetings has made it challenging for the OSCE to operate and maintain its activities.

Ambassador Igor Djundev, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, highlighted that the OSCE is the only security organization of its kind and underscored the need to preserve and build upon its structures and toolbox.

Looking ahead, participants noted that the OSCE has proven to be of added value in the European security system, and its tools ranging from field operations to mediation, training, and technical assistance have been effective in Ukraine. However, to continue to play a meaningful role in the country but also to meet Ukraine's expectations of the OSCE, the organization needs to find ways to repurpose itself, provide impactful support on the ground including through the consolidation of its political and diplomatic footprint to further strengthen co-ordination and dialogue with the Ukrainian leadership and with other international organizations. This requires necessary financial support and ultimately political will from participating states.

In closing, Secretary General Roberto Montella reminded parliamentarians of the many OSCE success stories and the tangible impact the organization's work has on more than one billion citizens across the OSCE region. He urged the parliamentarians to play a decisive role in generating political support from their governments for the organization.

SG Montella discusses election observation work at PACE conference in Bern

Addressing a conference organized by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly focused on elections in times of crisis, Secretary General Roberto Montella described OSCE PA experiences, and lessons learned, from election observation during the COVID pandemic. The meeting, organized in co-operation with the Swiss Parliament, included PACE parliamentarians, election management bodies, and other experts.

The two-day conference explored topics related to holding elections in the context of natural disasters and armed conflict, as well as the impact of digital transformations on elections.

In advance of the conference, and upon invitation of the Secretary General of PACE, Despina Chatzivassiliou, Montella and staff of the International Secretariat met with counterparts



Roberto Montella, Matteo Mecacci and Alexandr Berlinschi, 9 May

from PACE, OSCE/ODIHR and NATO Parliamentary Assembly to discuss ways to enhance co-operation in the field of election observation.

Annual Session documents distributed as Conference Team visits Vancouver

Preparations are proceeding for the OSCE PA's 30th Annual Session, to be held from 30 June to 4 July 2023 in Vancouver, Canada, under the theme "Strengthening Regional Security by Fostering Democratic and Inclusive Societies: The Role of the OSCE PA." General Committee reports and draft resolutions have been posted to the PA's website and the Procedural Document has been circulated to all OSCE PA Delegations. Deadlines and the draft programme for the Session have also been posted on the website.

Staff members of the International Secretariat were on an assessment visit in Vancouver last week to meet with the team from the Canadian Parliament to co-ordinate all arrangements for the Annual Session. Gustavo Pallares, Odile Lelarge, Dimitrije Todoric, and Stephen Paul met with staff of the Canadian Parliament to discuss logistical, technical and security aspects of the meeting. During the visit, the PA's team visited the Vancouver Convention Centre, where the Session will take place, and positively assessed the premises, the programme and events for the Session.