

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 30th Annual Session set to begin in Vancouver

Strengthening Regional Security by Fostering Democratic and Inclusive Societies: The Role of the OSCE PA

The 30th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
30 June to 4 July 2023



Hundreds of parliamentarians from North America, Europe and Central Asia are gathering this week in Vancouver, Canada, for the 30th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Under the theme of "Strengthening Regional Security by Fostering Democratic and Inclusive Societies: The Role of the OSCE PA," the meeting will take place 30 June to 4 July at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

Following several days of committee work, the Annual Session will culminate in the adoption of the Vancouver Declaration on 4

July, containing recommendations to national governments, parliaments and the international community. The largest event on the Assembly's calendar, the Annual Session will focus largely on the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and its related political, security and humanitarian impacts.

Other important issues to be covered at the meeting include:

- Political prisoners in the OSCE area
- Migration
- Institutional challenges of the OSCE
- Economic security and COVID recovery
- Good governance and fighting corruption
- Protecting the Arctic
- Energy infrastructure
- Minority rights and vulnerable groups
- Impact of technology on human rights
- Science diplomacy
- Plastic pollution
- Human trafficking

Programmes, reports and draft resolutions are available at the OSCE PA's website.

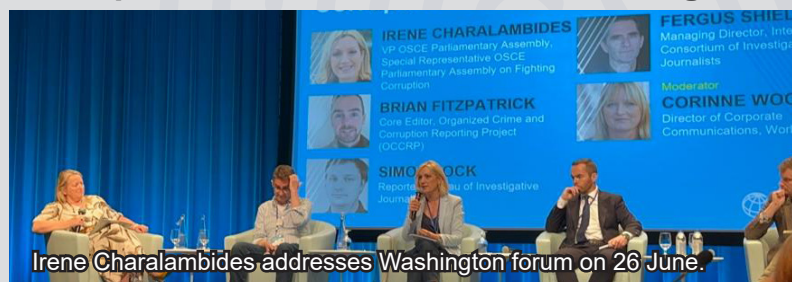
OSCE PA Special Representative on Fighting Corruption addresses forum in Washington

Speaking Monday at the Anticorruption for Development Global Forum in Washington, DC, OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) highlighted the role of the media in raising public awareness about corruption and its consequences.

At its finest, she said, investigative journalism shines a light on corruption and exposes nefarious individuals and organizations who betray the public trust. In order to ensure that journalism is able to fulfill this function, however, it is essential that journalists and media organizations are free from undue influence and provided necessary legal protections in taking on powerful interests.

Special Representative Charalambides also highlighted the need to bridge the gap between policy and practice, as too often anti-corruption laws and strategies are poorly implemented, and stressed the important role played by international institutions and watchdogs in this field. Parliaments are very well equipped for this battle, she said, stressing that interparliamentary co-operation can also play a major role, including by sharing best practices and upholding international commitments.

In this regard, she referred to PA events that have focused



on this issue, including the two-day international conference on "Combating Corruption, Defending Democracy: the Role of National Parliaments" held in Cyprus on 27-28 May 2022, and the Parliamentary Web Dialogue "Parliamentarians & Journalists: Partners Against Corruption," held on 14 October 2020.

This week's conference in Washington, taking place 26-27 June, was held under the theme "Restoring Trust," and was hosted by the World Bank's Governance Global Practice, co-hosted by the Agency for International Development, the UN, Transparency International, as well as several other organizations.

Hadjiyianni stresses need for parliamentary-civil society co-operation at OSCE meeting



Kyriakos Hadjiyianni addresses the SHDIM on 26 June.

At the third OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of 2023 on the "Role of Civil Society in the Promotion and Protection of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination" on Monday, OSCE PA Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) underlined the role civil society organizations play in tackling discrimination and intolerance in democratic societies, as well as the role of national parliaments.

The Special Representative described the PA's efforts to address the issue of the shrinking space for civil society, for example by passing resolutions which can then be applied to the national legislative and policy framework, specifically mentioning one that will be considered at the 2023 Annual Session in Vancouver in just a few days. Also important is the PA's role as a forum to bring together parliamentarians and experts to identify best practices in dealing with the cases of discrimination and intolerance and with the issues pertaining to enhancing the role of civil society.

As part of his visit to Vienna, Hadjiyianni also met with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Civil Society Andreja Stojkovski to discuss common issues the civil society faces in the OSCE region, as well as to identify possible areas for co-operation. He also held a meeting with the Vienna staff of the OSCE PA International Secretariat.