

Pia Kauma elected President of the OSCE PA along with new Bureau members



Pia Kauma addresses the Assembly upon being elected on 4 July.

Pia Kauma (Finland) was elected Assembly President Tuesday at the 30th Annual Session in Vancouver. She has a long-running background in the Assembly, serving previously as Rapporteur of the OSCE PA's First Committee in 2013 and as Vice-President since 2021. She was appointed as Special Representative on Central Asia in August 2021 and previously served as Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement.

Upon her election, she gave an inaugural speech that focused on the need for deeper and more meaningful co-operation, and

pledged to work hard over the next year to advance OSCE values. "The OSCE is at a crossroads but I strongly believe that our organization is worth all our efforts," she said. "Together we are stronger and only together can we solve common challenges."

Also elected Tuesday were three Vice-Presidents: Daniela De Ridder (Germany), Mykyta Poturaiev (Ukraine), and Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus). Johan Büser (Sweden) was elected Treasurer. On Monday, the PA's three general committees elected their leadership for the coming year.

In the First Committee, Richard Hudson (United States) was re-elected Chair, Costel Neculai Dunava (Romania) was re-elected Vice-Chair, and Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) was re-elected Rapporteur. The Second Committee re-elected Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) Chair, Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) Vice-Chair, and Gudrun Kugler (Austria) Rapporteur. Three new officers were elected to the Third Committee: Chair Lucie Potůčková (Czech Republic), Vice-Chair Sargis Khandanyan (Armenia), and Rapporteur Malik Ben Achour (Belgium).

Assembly adopts Vancouver Declaration, establishes Ukraine working group

The OSCE PA's 30th Annual Session, which opened with speeches on 30 June by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), Speaker of the Canadian Senate Raymond Gagné, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons Chris d'Entremont, and Head of the OSCE PA's Canadian Delegation Hedy Fry, culminated on 4 July with adoption of the Assembly's Vancouver Declaration. Containing recommendations on political and military affairs, economic and environmental concerns, and human rights, the Declaration will now be made available to parliaments and governments of OSCE participating States.

Focusing heavily on the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, the Vancouver Declaration also addresses such diverse topics as plastic pollution, migration and nuclear weapons. It also deals extensively with institutional challenges facing the OSCE, expressing deep concern about "increased attempts to misuse the OSCE consensus rule to block" the organization's functioning.

More than 225 members of parliament from 50 countries par-



Voting in the Third Committee

ticipated in the Annual Session.

Meeting on 30 June, the OSCE PA's Standing Committee unanimously approved a proposal to establish a new parliamentary working group devoted to addressing the Russian Federation's ongoing war in Ukraine. Then-President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) said that the objective of the ad hoc committee is to ensure that the war remains at the forefront of the PA's activities and that Ukraine's needs are well considered. The mandate and composition of the working group will be announced in due time.

Side meetings focus on an array of issues at the 30th Annual Session in Vancouver



Migration committee meets on 1 July in Vancouver.

On the sidelines of the Annual Session, the PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration met on Saturday to review implemented activities, including a visit the previous day, organized by committee member Hedy Fry, to the NGO S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in Vancouver's Chinatown. The Network of Young Parliamentarians, chaired by David Stögmüller (Austria), heard from Special Representative on Youth Engagement Farah Karimi (Netherlands) and Guido Almerigogna, Special Advisor of North Macedonia's OSCE Chairmanship, who shared examples of youth engagement in the OSCE. The meeting included a panel discussion with Senators Marilou McPhedran and Rosemary Moodie from Canada focusing on Youth, Peace and Security and Canada's experience in

building youth engagement.

Also meeting on Saturday was the Silk Road Support Group, an informal network to support economic co-operation. OSCE PA Special Representative and Head of Canada's Delegation Hedy Fry welcomed participants to Sunday's Working Lunch on Gender Issues, which was held under the theme "Gender-related considerations in armed conflicts: A parliamentary perspective" and featured presentations by representatives of Canadian parliament, academia and civil society.

The OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism met Monday. Chaired by Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), the meeting featured a presentation by Prof. Jason Blazakis. Discussing Russia's Wagner Group, Blazakis noted that it has committed many human rights abuses including summary executions, rape, torture, and child abductions. To counter this alarming trend, he urged increased monitoring by international and national bodies. The CCT meeting also included a review of implemented and upcoming activities.

Other side meetings during the Annual Session focused on nuclear threats, antisemitism, and war crimes in Ukraine.