

## OSCE PA Bureau and PSTU members meet at Verkhovna Rada in visit to Ukraine



Members of the OSCE PA delegation on their way to Ukraine, 11 February 2025.



OSCE PA Bureau and PSTU members meet in the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv, 12 February 2025.

Visiting Kyiv this week, a large OSCE PA delegation is meeting with Ukrainian leaders and discussing the importance of the OSCE decisively tackling the complex challenges posed by the Russian Federation's war of aggression. The delegation, led by President Pia Kauma (Finland) and including members of the Bureau and the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine, has met with Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stepanchuk and Ukraine's Delegation to the PA. More meetings with Ukrainian government officials and institutional representatives are expected on Thursday.

As a statement of the PA's commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, democracy and resilience, the OSCE parliamentarians held a Bureau meeting today in the Verkhovna Rada where they heard presentations by Ombudsperson Dmytro Lubinets and member of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA Yaroslav Yurchyshyn. The issue of prisoners of war and political prisoners featured prominently, with Bureau members hearing from three former captives presenting their personal testimonies.

During the discussion, OSCE PA members emphasized that any negotiations about Ukraine must include Ukraine at the table. With renewed hopes for a cessation of hostilities, parliamentarians also stressed the importance of ensuring a just peace in full accordance with international law. Discussions have focused on how the OSCE PA, its PSTU, and the OSCE more broadly can most effectively contribute by conducting fact-finding missions, monitoring activities and confidence-building.

President Kauma emphasized that the delegation visited Ukraine to learn more about how the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly can best support the government, civil society, and people of Ukraine. Bureau members heard about war crimes and the human rights situation in Ukraine, with a focus on detained and missing civilians, women, and children. Parliamentarians also discussed media freedom during the war and countering Russian propaganda, as well as the importance of returning journalists from Russian captivity.

This morning, the delegation participated in a ceremony honoring the National Guard servicemen who died during their service near the Verkhovna Rada on 31 August 2015, as well as parliamentarians and employees of the Verkhovna Rada who died for Ukraine.

With visits to several locations in Kyiv and Irpin, the delegation is learning about crimes against the civilian population and the destruction of the critical infrastructure. The delegation is also visiting the OSCE's Support Programme for Ukraine office in Kyiv and meeting with the relatives of the OSCE staff members detained and sentenced by the Russian Federation. Tomorrow, they expect to meet with civil society representatives.

The delegation includes members of 12 national parliaments, support staff and members of the PA Secretariat, including Secretary General Roberto Montella. President Kauma will report on the visit to Kyiv at the PA's Winter Meeting in Vienna, taking place on 20-21 February.

## Kauma reaffirms commitment to combating anti-Semitism at Helsinki conference

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) spoke on Monday at the Conference on Addressing Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region in Helsinki, organized by the Finnish OSCE Chairpersonship. In her opening remarks, President Kauma noted that the OSCE's founding principles are a reminder that respect for fundamental rights and freedoms must be upheld for all, without distinction. Reaffirming the commitment to combating anti-Semitism in all its forms is essential, she said, while acknowledging that anti-Semitism is on the rise across the OSCE region.

Following the tragedy of 7 October 2023, there has been an alarming increase in anti-Semitic incidents, including in societies that historically have had low levels of anti-Semitic attitudes. Par-

liamentarians, she said, bear a special responsibility to strengthen legal frameworks, promote education on the Holocaust and Jewish history, and foster interfaith dialogue. It is also important to ensure that Jewish communities trust their governments to guarantee their security and fundamental freedoms.

Emphasizing that anti-Semitism is not confined to one ideology or political movement, Kauma underscored that all anti-Semitic acts must be identified, reported, and punished. The OSCE PA, she emphasized, will remain committed to sharing best practices and working together to combat anti-Semitism, noting that this is essential to protecting the integrity of democratic institutions.

## Secretary General Montella represents OSCE PA in Washington meetings

Last week, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella was in Washington, DC, for the National Prayer Breakfast, the Interparliamentary Security Forum, and meetings with members of the US Delegation. Montella had the opportunity to meet individually with several US Members, including Head of Delegation Joe Wilson, Vice-President Richard Hudson, former Vice-President Roger Wicker, and Special Representative on Political Prisoners Steve Cohen. Discussions focused on OSCE PA-US co-operation, regional challenges, and future activities.



Roberto Montella in Washington, 6 February 2025

SG Montella expressed strong appreciation for the strong engagement of the United States in the Assembly and the leadership of US Members.