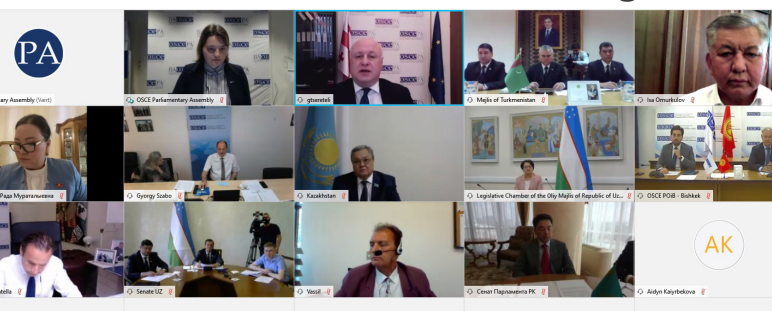


Central Asian OSCE PA delegations focus on regional aspects of COVID-19



Parliamentarians from Central Asian countries met online Tuesday with OSCE PA President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Secretary General Roberto Montella. The parliamentarians were joined by the representatives of OSCE field operations in Central Asia, as well as regional experts from the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center, OSCE Secretariat, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

OSCE PA Heads of Delegation and Deputy Heads of Delegation from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

spoke about recent developments in their countries, including the authorities' responses to COVID-19 in the field of health care and economic aid measures. Also in focus were legislative reform efforts, elections, regional co-operation, parliamentary dialogue, and Central Asian engagement in OSCE PA activities.

The PA President and Secretary General underlined the importance of regional connectivity, co-operation, timely exchange of information and dialogue among the parliamentarians in order to promote beneficial outcomes for the people of the region.

In the discussion, the OSCE PA delegations provided updates on the public health situations and other developments in the region. Parliamentarians highlighted measures taken in their countries to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and legislative initiatives taken in response to the pandemic, as well as ongoing legislative reform in the areas of parliamentarism, democratization, health care, and fundamental rights and freedoms.

Regional co-operation and the importance of mutual support was highlighted by several delegations. Appreciation was also expressed for the OSCE PA as an effective platform for dialogue and inter-parliamentary relations in which critical issues and joint responses to common challenges can be discussed.

New OSCE PA report: "The Gendered Impacts of COVID-19"

Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) has published a report ahead of next week's Parliamentary Web Dialogue on "The Gendered Impacts of COVID-19." Read the full report here: <https://bit.ly/3dRoztB>

To register for the webinar, please fill out the registration form here: <https://bit.ly/2MK0ngO> Deadline: 10:00 CET, 15 June.

MPs, UN and OSCE experts discuss counter-terrorism during pandemic

The OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) met 5 June in an online format for its seventh official meeting. Members noted that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional threats such as terrorism and violent extremism are as relevant as ever and must remain high on the international agenda. Committee members also discussed ongoing work of the CCT, including a Parliamentary Web Dialogue scheduled for late June.

The meeting was addressed by CCT Chair Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov, Chair of the OSCE's Security Committee and Head of UK Delegation to the OSCE Neil Bush, and Chelsea L. Daymon, an independent expert on terrorism and political violence. Also addressing the meeting were PA President George Tsereteli, Secretary General Roberto Montella, and Alena Kupchyna, the OSCE Co-ordinator for Activities to Address Transnational Threats.

Parliamentarians discussed how crisis situations such as



the COVID-19 pandemic can aggravate threats by offering new opportunities for terrorist groups to prosper and achieve their goals, as the attention of the world has shifted elsewhere. Violent extremists are exploiting the fear and anxiety caused by the pandemic to spread misinformation and further their ideologies, according to Voronkov, who welcomed the work of the OSCE PA in addressing these issues.

OSCE PA Special Representative Cardin pushes for reforms in policing

OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin (United States) has been active in pushing for meaningful legislation to reform policing in the United States in the wake of ongoing protests around the world demanding justice for recent victims of police brutality. In a statement on the floor of the Senate last week, Cardin called for an end to racial profiling in law enforcement and reforms in the criminal justice system. On Monday he held an online forum with representatives of two US civil society organizations, the National Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Watch here: <https://youtu.be/9e7fFCrGWt8>

