

REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY'S 26TH ANNUAL SESSION MINSK, BELARUS





REPORT ON THE 26TH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
MINSK DECLARATION	2
INAUGURAL PLENARY SESSION	4
STANDING COMMITTEE	8
GENERAL COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY ...	12
GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT	14
GENERAL COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS	16
SECOND PLENARY SESSION	18
CLOSING PLENARY SESSION	19
OFFICERS OF THE ASSEMBLY	22
GENERAL COMMITTEE OFFICERS	25

Summary



Hosted by the Belarusian Parliament, the OSCE PA's 26th Annual Session took place 5-9 July 2017.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly met on 5-9 July 2017 in Minsk, Belarus, for its 26th Annual Session. With some 260 parliamentarians from North America, Europe and Asia participating, the theme of the Session was "Enhancing mutual trust and co-operation for peace and prosperity in the OSCE region."

The Session included meetings of the Standing Committee, each of the three general committees, three plenary sessions, and several side events. It concluded on 9 July with the adoption of the Minsk Declaration and election of Assembly leaders.

Speakers at the Session included Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko, Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus Vladimir Andreichenko, OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen (Austria), and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz.

The Standing Committee met on 5 July and unanimously agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, which was tasked with developing an effective international response to extremist violence.

The Standing Committee also heard reports from the Treasurer, German parliamentarian Doris Barnett, who focused on the OSCE PA's present financial situation, and Secretary General Roberto Montella, who described his priorities of strengthening the International

Secretariat and enhancing co-operation with partners. Leaders of election observation missions, Special Representatives and chairs of ad hoc committees also reported to the Standing Committee on their work.

At the close of the Session, President Muttonen was re-elected to a second term by acclamation. Doris Barnett was re-elected Treasurer by acclamation. The PA elected Italian parliamentarian Marietta Tidei, United States Senator Roger Wicker, Swedish parliamentarian Margareta Cederfelt, and re-elected Romanian MP Victor Dobre as Vice-Presidents.

In the Committee on Political Affairs and Security, Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland) was elected Chair; Guglielmo Picchi (Italy) Vice-Chair; and Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) Rapporteur.

The Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment elected Nilza Sena (Portugal) as Chair; Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) Vice-Chair; and Sofio Katsarava (Georgia) Rapporteur. Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain) was elected Chair of the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, with Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic) elected Vice-Chair, and Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjijianni (Cyprus) Rapporteur.

Side events were held in Minsk on issues including human rights in Belarus, migration, human trafficking, nuclear weapons, and promoting women's leadership in politics.

Minsk Declaration



Voting on the Minsk Declaration.

At the close of each Annual Session, the Assembly adopts a Declaration with recommendations in the fields of political affairs, security, economics, environment and human rights. Representing the collective voice of the OSCE parliamentarians, the Declaration helps shape OSCE and national policy. It is complemented by a number of supplementary items relating to OSCE commitments and values.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly adopted the 2017 Minsk Declaration on 9 July, with recommendations to help guide OSCE work and shape national policies in the fields of political-military affairs, economics and environment, and human rights. Parliamentarians adopted the Declaration by a vote of 91-15, with three abstentions. Following its adoption, the Declaration was sent to parliaments and to the foreign ministers of OSCE countries, and was presented to national ambassadors to the OSCE in Vienna, serving as policy advice to governments and the international community.

The document includes resolutions dealing with terrorism, conflict resolution, climate change, migration, human rights, the crisis in and around Ukraine, the death penalty, new voting technologies, energy and water security, religious discrimination, new psychoactive substances, preventing child sexual exploitation, promoting gender-inclusive conflict mediation, and more. (The Declaration can be downloaded in the OSCE's six official languages at www.oscepa.org.)

The Declaration "urges participating States to recommit to multilateral diplomacy in the pursuit of comprehensive security and to implement OSCE confidence-building measures" to reduce the risk of conflict. It calls for governments to "develop measures aimed at blocking the funding of terrorist organizations" and enhance counter-terrorism measures "by improving legal frameworks and law enforcement methods, strengthening the

security of international transportation, and by tracking the movements of terrorists within countries and across borders."

In the economic and environmental dimension, the Declaration "urges all OSCE participating States to recognize the urgency of the climate crisis and its related challenges" and underlines that "domestic economic policies should prioritize clean energy projects, investment and innovation to promote sustained growth and ensure that negative effects on the environment are minimized." It further calls on all OSCE countries "to ratify the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change [and] to fulfill their obligations under the agreement."

"The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly underlines respect for the principles of the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes, equal rights, and self-determination of peoples."

2017 OSCE PA Minsk Declaration

On human rights, the Declaration "calls on OSCE participating States to respect the human dignity and equal rights of all their citizens by implementing to the fullest extent all OSCE commitments concerning human rights, fundamental freedoms, pluralistic democracy, and the rule of law." It urges an immediate end to "the harassment, imprisonment, mistreatment, and disappearance of political opponents, human rights defenders, journalists, and other members of civil society."

A supplementary item on migration called on the OSCE and participating States "to enhance their co-operation and co-ordination and the sharing of best practices with the aim of developing a coherent, shared and responsible approach to migration governance underpinned by the principles of solidarity."



Inaugural Opening Session



Speaking at the opening inaugural session were Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko; Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, Vladimir Andreichenko; OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Christine Muttunen; and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz.

Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Belarus

In a keynote address, President Lukashenko stressed that the Parliamentary Assembly is “an effective forum for strengthening security in our region,” and is critical for the OSCE. He spoke about conflicts in the Middle East that are having an impact on Europe, as well as protracted conflicts in the OSCE area such as Nagorno-Karabakh and Transdniestria, stressing that it is imperative that the international community focuses closely on these issues before they lead to even greater problems.

Lukashenko highlighted in particular terrorism, climate change, migration, and the crisis in and around Ukraine as matters requiring urgent attention, noting the potential for greater co-operation in the politico-military sphere, including on counter-terrorism and cybersecurity. He further called for an OSCE summit of heads of state to take place in the near future and stressed the need to reinvigorate the OSCE’s founding principles agreed to in Helsinki in 1975.

Christine Muttunen, President of the OSCE PA

President Muttunen noted that based on their shared historical experiences, OSCE countries have adopted common values and commitments to promote a comprehensive model of security that places democracy and human rights at the forefront.

“We have learned that real security means more than just the absence of war. Real security means ensuring that human rights are respected, that elections are democratic, that corruption is contained and that the rule of law is upheld,” President Muttunen said. “It is through the hard work of democracy and diplomacy that we can help ensure political stability, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and ultimately, achieve our common goals of peace and prosperity.”

“Real security means ensuring that human rights are respected, that elections are democratic, that corruption is contained and that the rule of law is upheld.”

OSCE PA President Christine Muttunen

Muttunen noted that as a recognized location for international diplomacy and conflict resolution – including mediation processes related to Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh – Minsk would serve as an excellent venue for the Assembly’s work in the days ahead.

Vladimir Andreichenko, Chairman of the House of Representatives, National Assembly of Belarus

Andreichenko stressed the role of parliamentary diplomacy in meeting common challenges facing the OSCE region, noting that

Inaugural Opening Session



OSCE PA delegates listen to opening remarks at the 26th Annual Session in Minsk, 5 July 2017.

efforts to co-operatively resolve major international issues can have a trickle-down effect in addressing other pressing matters on the international, regional and national levels.

“We expect a constructive exchange of opinions during this session and, which is the most important, rejection of confrontational thinking in the process of finding solutions to the most difficult problems of the international agenda,” Chairman Andreichenko said.

“Parliamentary diplomacy must be used to build bridges and not to create division lines,” he said. “Making a step towards each other in terms of main issues we will achieve progress in resolution of minor ones as well.”

Sebastian Kurz, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, stressed that in the face of deep-seated conflicts and growing transnational threats, parliamentarians create opportunities for constructive dialogue.

“Especially in these difficult times, members of parliament have an even more important role to play. I am

“I am counting on the parliamentarians and their networks among their domestic population to exert their influence, so that concrete progress can be made, not least in the crisis in and around Ukraine”

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office
Sebastian Kurz

counting on the parliamentarians and their networks among their domestic population to exert their influence, so that concrete progress can be made, not least in the crisis in and around Ukraine,” said Minister Kurz.

Parliamentarians consider women’s leadership at Gender Lunch



Hedy Fry opens the Gender Lunch, 7 July 2017.

Opened by Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) and Assembly President Christine Muttonen (Austria), the Working Lunch on Gender Issues on 7 July featured addresses by Marianna Shchetkina, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus; and Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director of ODIHR. Fry remarked that governments and organizations are not using all their resources

if women are left out from decision-making processes, while President Muttonen underlined the inclusion of women as a fundamental issue for peace and security.

Discussions focused on concrete steps parliamentarians could take to promote women’s leadership in political processes and structures. Parliamentarians stressed the need for more gender equality, whether it be within the OSCE, national governments, or society more broadly.





Standing Committee



The Standing Committee consists of the Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, the Autumn Meeting and the Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget, and elects the OSCE PA Secretary General.

Chaired by Assembly President Christine Muttonen (Austria), the Standing Committee on 5 July featured reports by the OSCE PA Treasurer and Secretary General, as well as Special Representatives, chairs of ad hoc committees and leaders of recent election observation missions. The delegates voted unanimously on President Muttonen's proposal to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism.

Delegates approved 14 supplementary items for debate during the Annual Session. Two supplementary items were allocated to the First Committee, three to the Second Committee and five to the Third Committee. Three items, "Ensuring a Coherent, Shared and Responsible Governance of Migration and Refugee Flows", "Migration" and "Promoting Gender Inclusive and Responsive Mediation" were sent to plenary sessions for debate, while one item, "The Situation in Belarus," was not included on the agenda following an 8-20 vote by Standing Committee delegates.

Special Representative on the South Caucasus Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) welcomed the new Armenian Delegation to the OSCE PA and regretted the closure this year of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, a sentiment echoed by the Head of the Armenian Delegation. Roberto Battelli, Special Representative for South East Europe, outlined the need for increased attention to the Western Balkans, given the rise in negative trends in the region.

OSCE PA Vice-President George Tsereteli reported on a high-level visit he led to Turkey in June 2017, during which the OSCE PA team met with government and parliamentary leaders and all opposition parties represented in parliament. Tsereteli noted that the visit demonstrated the Turkish government's willingness to maintain dialogue.

Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland) reported on recent visits of committee members to Greece and Turkey, noting that the migration issue has no easy solution.

Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain) underlined the importance of parliamentarians maintaining credibility and impartiality in election observation missions, while Guglielmo Picchi (Italy) reported on the Assembly's first observation of elections in Mongolia in June.

Thanking the Parliament of Belarus for the excellent organization of the Annual Session, Treasurer Doris Barnett (Germany) reported that the PA continues to operate in a cost-effective manner, and urged members to continue their support – in terms of national governments offering secondments, hosting meetings, and providing extra-budgetary contributions. The Standing Committee unanimously approved the draft budget presented by Treasurer Barnett for the financial year 2017-2018.

Underlining the Assembly's potential for trust-building, Secretary General Roberto Montella stressed the importance of promoting mutual respect, eliminating double standards and increasing the credibility of institutions and international organizations.

Montella welcomed the decision to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism and highlighted the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration as a model for the work of the new committee. He thanked the migration committee members for their dedication and expressed regret that the four top leadership positions in the OSCE had not been filled by the start of the Annual Session.

The Standing Committee also heard reports on upcoming statutory meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly, including the 2017 Andorra Autumn Meeting, the 2018 Annual Session in Berlin, and the 2018 Autumn Meeting scheduled to take place in Kyrgyzstan.







General Committee on Political Affairs and Security



Roger Wicker (center) chairs the First Committee meeting on 6 July.

Committee Chair Roger Wicker (United States) opened the meeting on 6 July by thanking Belarus for hosting the 26th Annual Session and offering condolences to those affected by recent terror attacks. “These attacks should galvanize us our work,” he said. “Both within the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE we can play a meaningful role in bringing together participating nations in confronting terrorism and we should remain dedicated to supporting our allies and partners in this important endeavour.”

Wicker also expressed condolences over the death of OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine member Joseph Stone who was killed in eastern Ukraine on 23 April, and noted that attacks on OSCE SMM members have become all too common.

The Chair introduced Ambassador Ertugrul

Apakan (Turkey), Chief Monitor of the SMM, who gave a presentation via video link to the committee members.

Apakan briefed the committee about the ongoing challenges faced by the OSCE SMM and about the general security situation in the Donbas, noting that ceasefire violations continue with troubling frequency. He further underlined the need for full implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) presented the main focal points of her report, touching on cybersecurity, Turkey, terrorism, women in peacebuilding, the crisis in and around Ukraine, and other security challenges facing the OSCE area. On terrorism, she

Side event on detente and nuclear threat reduction



Members joined by video link from New York for a report on the UN anti-nuclear weapons treaty, 8 July 2017.

A day after the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at a UN conference in New York, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) convened a forum in Minsk to discuss current threats in Europe from nuclear weapons. The 8 July event explored the role of parliamentarians in promoting dialogue, detente and disarmament.

President Muttonen, who also serves as Co-President of PNND, spoke at the event and noted that the potential impact of nuclear weapons “is a matter of deepest concern for our organization.” Other OSCE PA delegates participating in the meeting included Hedy Fry (Canada), Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain), Miroslaw Wachowski (Holy See), and Soren Sondergaard (Denmark).

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

stressed the imperative of parliamentarians taking effective action to stop the violence being carried out against civilians in the OSCE area. "Innocent people are being targeted," she said. "We parliamentarians need to act to stop the terrorists and we can do so by using the OSCE toolbox. We can do much more to support peace, security and stability."

Cederfelt stressed the need for elected parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, to act to ensure the continued good functioning of the OSCE for the sake of peace, stability and security.

The rapporteur's resolution noted with concern the ongoing security challenges throughout the OSCE area, stressed the need to make full use of OSCE tools to strengthen confidence-building, reduce the risk of conflict, and promote long-term comprehensive security. In the discussion Members focused on several key issues that are of concern to the OSCE area, including terrorism and radicalization. Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) underlined the deterioration of the security situation in the Western Balkans, noting that rising ethnic tensions, resurging nationalism and foreign interference mark a series of negative trends that need to be reversed in this region.

Aase Michaelsen (Norway) urged participating States not to compromise on fundamental democratic freedoms and values. A free press and public and open debate should be guaranteed and are essential to fight radicalization and disinformation, Michaelsen said. She criticized the widespread use of espionage and the attacks on critical infrastructure in recent cyberattacks.

Andreas Kafkalias (Cyprus) traced some of the root causes of terrorism to a lack of social and economic integration. He called for the resolution of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa to resolve the migrant and refugee crisis and the security risks emanating from it. He also noted that the Cyprus negotiation for a comprehensive settlement is in a critical phase.

The committee resolution passed after consideration of 33 amendments.



Supplementary Items

The committee debated and adopted two supplementary items related to the situation in and around Ukraine and the fight against terrorism in the OSCE area.

The supplementary item "Restoration of Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Ukraine," sponsored by Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine), provided for a lively debate and was adopted with a number of amendments. The resolution calls to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, in particular concerning respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of frontiers of participating States. It further stressed the non-intervention in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, and refraining from the threat or use of force, reiterating the OSCE PA's stated commitment to fully implementing the Minsk Agreements.

The supplementary item "Strengthening the Role of the OSCE in Countering Terrorism," sponsored by Nikolay Kovalev (Russian Federation), was adopted with two amendments put forward by delegates from the United States. The resolution firmly condemns all terrorist acts and reiterates that terrorism in all its forms is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. It also welcomed the establishment of an ad hoc anti-terrorism committee to enhance the PA's role.

Election of Officers

Chair: Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland)

Vice-Chair: Guglielmo Picchi (Italy)

Rapporteur: Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria)

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment



Second Committee voting on a supplementary item, 7 July.

Committee Chair Nilza Sena (Portugal) presided over the three sessions of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment on 6-7 July. Members considered the report and resolution proposed by Rapporteur Marietta Tidei (Italy) and four supplementary items on energy security, new psychoactive substances, drinking water, and new voting technologies.

Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Marietta Tidei presented her report, which focused on combating climate change, promoting environmentally sustainable economic growth and adopting a coherent, co-ordinated response to migration. Tidei underlined the link between the two issues, stressing that the international community must develop

co-ordinated and comprehensive responses to deal with them effectively.

On climate change, the Rapporteur regretted the lack of progress in the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, expressed concern over the announced U.S. withdrawal, and highlighted other developments that could threaten the agreed-upon commitments.

Tidei welcomed the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship's decision to set "greening the economy" as one of its priorities, thereby supporting the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by all participating States. Moreover, she underlined how the Expo 2017 in Astana, with the theme of "Energy of the Future," could provide a useful platform to continue the dialogue on the issue.

Climate change is forcing people to move, contributing to migratory flows in response

Ad Hoc Committee on Migration discusses work plan



Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration meet on 6 July.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, chaired by Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland), met twice on the margins of the Annual Session to discuss its recent field visits to Greece and Turkey as well as the supplementary item "Ensuring a Coherent, Shared and Responsible Governance of Migration and Refugee Flows" and upcoming

report. Members also heard from Swiss Ambassador Claude Wild, Chair of the OSCE's Informal Working Group (IWG) on Migration, who briefed the Committee on developments on the governmental side and noted that a main challenge for the OSCE was to stay connected in the UN-led debate regarding a Global Compact on Migration. At its second meeting, the committee discussed future activities, to include a follow-up visit to Italy as well as possible thematic events, for example on the topic of unaccompanied minors. The committee agreed to finalize its report and recommendations for the 2017 Autumn Meeting in Andorra in October.

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

to flooding, droughts, scarcity of food or water and other climate-related emergencies, she said. The “environmental refugees,” she noted, are contributing to south-north migration, with the same path being followed by “economic migrants” seeking a better life in the more developed areas of the world.

Tidei called for the support of other countries of the European Union to share migration-related responsibilities through effective policies, restating the need to encourage the development of stable and healthy political, economic and social environments in countries of origin.

Seventeen parliamentarians took the floor to debate the resolution, raising issues including equal access to technological resources for populations in rural areas, the future of Paris Agreement after the announced withdrawal by the United States, scientific and research freedom, and the possibility of introducing a carbon tax.

The committee considered 20 amendments, of which 16 were adopted. Following the debate and the discussion of amendments, the resolution was adopted overwhelmingly.

Supplementary Items

The supplementary item “Strengthening Energy Security in the OSCE Region,” principally sponsored by Olga Bielkova (Ukraine), underlined that energy security plays a key role in ensuring economic growth and development. The resolution highlighted the multidimensional character of the energy security issue, recognizing the need to increase energy efficiency and market transparency, to diversify energy supplies, and to protect critical energy infrastructure from terrorist attacks. Five amendments were discussed and all were adopted. The item was adopted overwhelmingly.

Sponsored by Boleslav Pirshtuk (Belarus), the supplementary item “Developing a Timely and Effective Legislative, Regulatory and Administrative Response to the Emergence of New Psychoactive Substances” stressed the importance of developing a strong response to the emergence of new psychoactive substances to reduce their damaging effects on the health



Marietta Tidei and Marco Bonabello, 7 July

and safety of the population. It calls on OSCE participating States to exchange information through bilateral and multilateral channels on measures adopted and to share best practices to combat the spread of these substances. No amendments were presented to the resolution, which was adopted overwhelmingly.

The supplementary item “Drinking Water: Fostering Co-operation to Protect a Scarce Resource” sponsored by Godfrey Farrugia (Malta) formally recognized that climate change is the source of water-related crises and reaffirmed the importance of trans-boundary water co-operation as a tool to share this scarce resource and the benefits that come from it.

The item recalled a number of international and regional documents, conventions and directives and urged participating States to identify and treat water governance as a priority. It stresses that water is indispensable for human survival and well-being, and as such, its protection and management is a shared responsibility between all countries. The resolution was adopted unanimously with one amendment.

The last supplementary item, “Observation of New Voting Technologies,” sponsored by Bjorn Soder (Sweden), suggested updating election observation methods for new voting technologies and called for the development of new laws to control and manage these technologies. Three amendments were agreed to and the item was adopted overwhelmingly.

Election of Officers

Chair: Nilza Sena (Portugal)

Vice-Chair: Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine)

Rapporteur: Sofio Katsarava (Georgia)

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



Ignacio Sanchez Amor chairs the Third Committee on 8 July.

Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain) chaired four meetings of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions on 6-8 July. In addition to the main resolution, five supplementary items were adopted. The supplementary items agreed to by the committee dealt with topics such as prevention of child sexual exploitation, universal abolition of the death penalty, combating intolerance and discrimination, and ensuring the rule of law and democracy in all participating States.

Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjjianni (Cyprus) presented his report, starting by

expressing concern over the human dimension of the issue of protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. Hadjiyianni elaborated on the challenges that populist trends and religious fundamentalism represent for democracy, and the need for OSCE countries to reaffirm their commitment to basic principles and values such as tolerance, respect, freedom, and the rule of law. The Rapporteur called on participating States to resist implementing overly securitized responses to the terrorist threat, which would contradict their commitment to respect and protect fundamental freedoms and human rights. Hadjiyianni concluded by emphasizing the centrality of freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion or belief.

Parliamentarians from across the OSCE area

Rights in Belarus focus of panel discussion



MPs meet on the margins of the Annual Session for a seminar on human rights in Belarus, 6 July 2017.

The Swedish OSCE PA Delegation hosted a seminar on the second day of the Annual Session, moderated by OSCE PA Vice-President and Chair of the Working Group on Belarus Kent Harstedt (Sweden) focused on rights in Belarus. Featuring the participation of Miklos Haraszti, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights

in Belarus, the event provided a forum for representatives of civil society and political actors, including members of the Belarusian Parliament, to exchange views on ongoing developments and challenges in the country.

Among the organizations represented at the event were the Belarusian Journalists Association, Viasna Human Rights Center, Belarusian Helsinki Committee, United Civil Party, Tell the Truth Party, and Belarusian Peoples Front. More than 100 participants attended the seminar, offering a variety of perspectives on the state of democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms in Belarus.

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

took the floor raising a range of issues, including integration policies for refugees and migrants, the need to protect the most vulnerable populations – notably migrant women and children – human rights violations taking place in Ukraine, and the importance of the principles of tolerance and inclusion in the establishment of stability and peace in the OSCE region. Concerns were also expressed over the politicization of human rights issues.

Following the discussion, the committee debated the proposed amendments to the draft resolution authored by Hadjiyianni. Twenty-nine amendments to the resolution were considered and 20 agreed to, with additional paragraphs included on issues such as media and academic freedom and combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The resolution was adopted as amended by a vote of 31-2.

Supplementary Items

Five supplementary items were debated by the Third Committee. “Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Online Through Advances in Technology,” authored by Christopher Smith (United States), was unanimously adopted with three amendments. Before the vote, debate arose over the efficiency of age verification technologies applied to pornographic websites, and the limitations to civil liberties they might entail.

The supplementary item “Abolition of the Death Penalty” sponsored by Isabel Santos (Portugal) was also unanimously adopted with three amendments. While presenting her supplementary item, Santos stressed that the Assembly would not give up the fight against the death penalty until abolition is achieved on a global scale.

The supplementary item on “Multiculturalism – The Role of Cultural Values in Democratic Development in a Globalizing World” was presented by Deputy Head of the Azerbaijani Delegation Tahir Mirkishili, who underlined that the coexistence of various cultures in one country should be peaceful, bring equality between individuals and focus on integra-



Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjjiyianni presents his report, 6 July.

tion rather than assimilation. Furthermore, he called on participating States to consider multiculturalism as an essential element of the discussion of security and coexistence questions. The resolution was subsequently adopted by the committee.

The committee also debated a resolution on the “Inadmissibility of Discrimination and Intolerance Against Christians, Muslims and Adherents of Other Religions.” Liudmila Narusova (Russian Federation), sponsor of the supplementary item, pointed out that discrimination, intolerance, and terrorist acts committed on the ground of religious belief constitute a real threat for the OSCE, and that religious wars are currently under way as a result of intolerance. The resolution was passed with two amendments.

The supplementary item “The Situation in Eastern Europe” authored by Christian Holm Barenfeld (Sweden), provided for a spirited debate. The item addressed human rights violations and the lack of political freedom in a number of OSCE countries. Sixteen amendments were proposed, of which three were agreed to before the supplementary item was adopted by the committee.

The meeting closed with the election of committee officers.

Election of Officers

Chair: Ignacio Sanchez-Amor (Spain)

Vice-Chair: Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic)

Rapporteur: Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjjiyianni (Cyprus)

Second Plenary Session



OSCe PA President Christine Muttonen chaired two plenary sessions on 8-9 July, in which the Minsk Declaration was adopted and election results announced.

Hedy Fry, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues

Presenting her report, "Gender and the Integration of Refugees and Migrants," Hedy Fry emphasized the need for governments and citizens to consider migrants as a benefit for the social, cultural and economic development of a country. She underlined the importance of developing programmes for newcomers to integrate into society, arguing that marginalizing and discriminating against migrants and refugees only serves to alienate them, which makes them more susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups.

Fry pointed out that steps are needed to eliminate barriers women face to entering the labour force. The Special Representative also urged host countries to develop programmes for women migrants and refugees who have been sexually abused, to provide opportunities for healing and rehabilitation.

Supplementary Items

Following her report, Hedy Fry presented her supplementary item "Promoting Gender Inclusive and Responsive Mediation." Fry's resolution reaffirms UN Security Council Resolution 1325, particularly the call to engage women in all aspects of the conflict cycle.

Members thanked Fry for her resolution, stating that the peace process benefits

from having the perspectives of both genders, and stressed that the OSCE should place a stronger emphasis on gender equality in its hiring practices. The supplementary item was adopted by a vote of 72-11, with three abstentions.

Members considered two supplementary items on migration: "Ensuring a Coherent, Shared and Responsible Governance of Migration and Refugee Flows," principally sponsored by Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland), and "Migration," principally sponsored by Alain Neri (France).

Lombardi's item is based on his conclusion that flows of migrants and refugees will not end any time soon, and that participating States accepting migrants and refugees on a purely voluntary basis is no longer an acceptable solution. Neri's item calls for a solution to the migration problem, arguing that more needs to be done in terms of terrorism, addressing population growth, and combating the effects of climate change. Both supplementary items were adopted.

Open Debate

The floor was opened for general debate, with more than 25 parliamentarians participating in the discussion. Members addressed a wide variety of issues, including: terrorism, sovereignty and territorial integrity, migration, the safeguarding of natural resources, and the need to continue building trust in the OSCE region. Members expressed the sentiment that the OSCE must work effectively as an organization to increase trust and solidarity, and to resolve conflicts.

On the issue of terrorism, several parliamentarians stressed that citizens' fundamental freedoms and human rights must not be curtailed in counter-terrorism efforts. Concerning migration, some Members emphasized the need for shared responsibility and for governments to honor their commitments under international humanitarian law including by hosting those fleeing armed conflict and persecution.

Closing Plenary Session



Open Debate (continued)

Twenty-two speakers participated in the debate on 9 July, addressing issues such as terrorism, freedom of the media, climate change and environmental sustainability, migration, and gender equality.

On terrorism, the Russian Delegation remarked on the Russian government's efforts in addressing the threat. Morocco shared the successful experience of its national multi-dimensional approach. The Ukrainian Delegation underlined the importance of the OSCE activities in the country and highlighted the importance of the continuation of the SMM.

Lord Alfred Dubs (United Kingdom) focused on the urgent and concerning situation in Italy and Greece related to the migration and refugee crisis. He stressed the need to help these countries to prevent further destabilization.

President Muttonen took a moment to focus on four empty chairs on the podium, which she pointed out were vacant due to the OSCE's lack of agreement on filling the positions. Calling the vacancies "unacceptable," she urged the OSCE to overcome its diplomatic gridlock and move to appoint the OSCE Secretary General, ODIHR Director, Representative on Freedom of the Media and High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Paul Bekkers, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General

In the absence of agreement on the appointment of a new OSCE Secretary General, the Director of the Office addressed the assembled

MPs. Amb. Bekkers stressed the role of the OSCE as a unique platform for dialogue, but said the Organization should adapt in order to effectively respond to emerging threats.

Bekkers suggested some instruments to achieve this goal, such as: reforming the interaction between the different OSCE Institutions and offices; updating the strategy behind OSCE presence in the field and exploring the possibility of opening new offices; encouraging countries' financial contributions by stressing how the OSCE manages to achieve substantial results with a moderate amount of funds. Bekkers also underlined that the lack of legal personality for the Organization can pose a risk to the OSCE itself, and encouraged continued dialogue on the issue.

Finally, Bekkers suggested considering the option of a multi-year budget, which would be more effective and would align the OSCE's practices with those of other organizations.

Doris Barnett, OSCE PA Treasurer

Treasurer Doris Barnett reported that the Assembly's budget remains within the stated objectives of austerity and accountability, noting that the financial resources of the Assembly are being used effectively and efficiently. She thanked Secretary General Roberto Montella and the entire International Secretariat for ensuring the smooth operation of the Assembly.

Additionally, Barnett invited Members to the 27th Annual Session, to be held on 7-11 July 2018 at the Bundestag in Berlin, noting that preparations are moving along well.

Closing Plenary Session

Roberto Montella, OSCE PA Secretary General

Montella began by expressing gratitude to the Belarusian Parliament for hosting the event and commended the record level of participation for the Minsk Annual Session, noting that only two delegations were not present. Reiterating his remarks to the Standing Committee, Montella underlined three areas of importance for the future of the organization's work: ensuring the credibility of the OSCE, developing mutual respect, and eliminating double standards. He also discussed the internal situation of the PA, including the adoption of new financial and staff rules meant to increase transparency and accountability.

Montella highlighted the good relations between the PA and partners within the OSCE, including ODIHR, noting that effective cooperation within the OSCE family helps deliver results. He thanked President Muttonen for her leadership, and expressed gratitude to former OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier for his work. Montella also thanked Filippo Lombardi and the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration for their work on current migration issues.

Additionally, Secretary General Montella also took a moment during the session to thank Arta Dade (Albania), who was leaving the Parliamentary Assembly after 14 years, for her contributions to the OSCE PA.

Adoption of Minsk Declaration

The OSCE PA's Minsk Declaration was adopted by majority vote, with 91 votes in favour, 15 against and three abstentions. Supplementary items were also adopted; however, the resolution forwarded by the Third Committee, "The Situation in Eastern Europe," failed to receive a majority in a 43-43 vote, and was not included in the final document.

Announcement of Election Results and Closing Remarks

The Session ended with the announcement of election results by Lord Peter Bowness. President Muttonen and Treasurer Barnett were re-elected by acclamation. Four Vice-Presidents were elected: Victor Paul Dobre (Romania), Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), Roger Wicker (United States) and Marietta Tidei (Italy).

President Muttonen thanked the organizers and participants for making the 26th Annual Session a success. "Not only have we reached agreement on some of the most difficult issues of the day – and are issuing a very strong political document today – but we have also worked towards restoring the spirit of cooperation that we need so badly," she said. Muttonen ended by underlining that "building bridges" would serve as the guiding principle for her continued work as President.

Human trafficking event focuses on protection of victims



The Belarusian Foreign Ministry, the Belarusian Parliament and the International Organization for Migration co-organized a side event on combating trafficking in human beings on 6 July. Featuring the participation of Oleg Kravchenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus; Boleslav Pirshtuk, Head of the Delegation of Belarus to the OSCE PA; Argentina Szabados, IOM Regional Director for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central

Asia; Second Committee Rapporteur Marietta Tidei (Italy), and OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues Chris Smith (United States), the event drew attention to the issue of human trafficking with a focus on the protection of victims.

Participants shared knowledge, best practices and their experiences as source, transit and destination countries in the field of combating trafficking in human beings.



Officers of the Assembly

The Officers of the Assembly, also known as the Bureau, include the President, Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, General Committee Officers and the President Emeritus. The Bureau is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Standing Committee are carried out and for the efficient operation of the Assembly between meetings of the Standing Committee. The Bureau takes decisions by a two-thirds majority vote.



Bureau members pose for a photo, 9 July 2017.

Christine Muttonen (Austria)



was elected President at the 2016 Annual Session and re-elected in 2017. Muttonen previously served as OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative for Central and Eastern Asia, and is Deputy Head of the Austrian Delegation to the PA.

She has been a Member of the Austrian Parliament since 1999 and serves as area spokesperson for the Austrian Social Democratic Parliamentary Group for Foreign Politics. She is also a member of her national delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Muttonen was a teacher before her career in politics.

Ilkka Kanerva (Finland)

is the Assembly's President Emeritus. Elected President at the 2014 Annual Session and re-elected in 2015, Kanerva is a former OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, and has been a member of the Finnish Parliament since 1975.



He has held a variety of posts in his government and national legislature, including service as Foreign Minister, Minister of Transport,

Deputy Prime Minister, and Deputy Speaker of Parliament. In the PA, he has served as Vice-President and as Co-Chair of the OSCE PA's Helsinki +40 Project. He is currently the PA's Special Representative on Mediation.

Doris Barnett (Germany)

was elected Treasurer in 2015 and re-elected in 2017. Previously an OSCE PA Vice-President, she has been a member of the German Bundestag since 1994, where she currently serves on the Committee on Economics and Technology



and the Committee on European Union Affairs. She is the Head of the German Delegation to the OSCE PA and is also a member of the Council of Europe and the European Security and Defence Assembly.

Roberto Battelli (Slovenia)

was elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki after serving for three terms as the Assembly's Treasurer. He is also the OSCE PA's Special Representative on South East Europe,



Officers of the Assembly

a position he has held since 2006. Since becoming a member of the OSCE PA in 1992, Battelli has been particularly active in election observation, observing some two dozen elections across the OSCE area. Battelli has been a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia since 1990, where he is a member of the parliamentary expert group that was responsible for drafting the country's constitution.

Peter Bowness (United Kingdom)

was elected Vice-President of the OSCE PA at the Helsinki Annual Session in 2015. As a member of the House of Lords, he serves on the European Union Energy and Environment Sub-Committee and has been a member of the European Union Select Committee, among other assignments. He has been a member of the British Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2007 and serves as Chair of the OSCE PA's Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Working Practices.



Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden)

was elected Vice-President in 2017 after serving two years as the Rapporteur for the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security. First entering the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) in 1999, Cederfelt served as an Alternate Member of the Swedish Delegation to the OSCE PA from 2010 to 2014 and since 2014 as Deputy Head of the Delegation. In her national parliament, Cederfelt has served as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs since 2014. She has also served as Chair of the National Board of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) and Treasurer of the PGA Executive Board since 2011.



Victor Paul Dobre (Romania)



was elected to a one-year term as Vice-President at the OSCE PA's 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi and re-elected in Minsk. A member of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies since 2000, Dobre has served on the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2009. In his national parliament, Dobre serves as Chairman of the Committee on Public Administration and Territorial Planning.

Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan)



was elected Vice-President in Tbilisi. He previously served for three years as Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security. A member of his national parliament since 2005, Guliyev currently sits on the Permanent Committee on State Building and is a member of several working groups promoting Azerbaijan's bilateral relations with various countries. Since 2008, he has also served as Chair of the Council on State Support to NGOs. Guliyev has been a member of Azerbaijan's OSCE PA Delegation since 2005.

Isabel Santos (Portugal)



was elected Vice-President in 2016, after having previously served three terms as Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Santos has been a member of Portuguese Parliament from

Officers of the Assembly

2005 to 2009 and resumed her service in the Parliament in 2011. In parliament, she serves on the Committee on Budget, Finance and Public Administration and the Committee on Agriculture and the Sea. As Chair of the Third Committee she was particularly active, leading delegations and fact-finding missions to Kazakhstan and Guantanamo Bay, as well as to refugee camps in Rome, Lampedusa, Catania, Czech Republic, and Serbia.

Marietta Tidei (Italy)



was elected Vice-President of the Assembly in 2017 after serving as Rapporteur of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment since 2014. She has been particularly active in

the Assembly on election observation, having served as Special Co-ordinator of OSCE short-term observers for elections in Tajikistan (2015) and Kazakhstan (2016), and as Head of the OSCE PA Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014), Russia (2016), and Albania (2017). Elected to her national parliament in 2013, Tidei is active in the Parliamentary Committee for the Procedures of Charge and the Committee on Economic Activities, Trade and Tourism. She is from Rome and is a member of the Democratic Party.

George Tsereteli (Georgia)

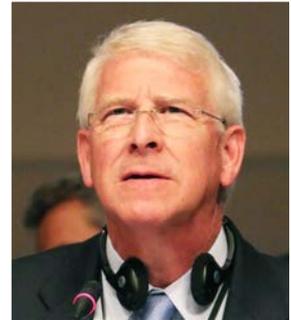
was elected Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the 2012 Annual Session in Monaco and re-elected at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki. Following a career in business and as a practicing neurologist, Tsereteli came to politics in 1995, serving in the Tbilisi municipality and as Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. He has been a Member of Par-



liament since 1999, and has served as Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Vice Prime Minister, Chairman of the Committee on Regional Policy, Chairman of the Committee on Healthcare and Social Issues and as Acting Chairman of Parliament.

Roger Wicker (United States)

was elected Vice-President in Minsk after serving as Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security since November 2014. Wicker currently serves as the Chair of the Commission on Security and



Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission). Within the U.S. Senate he is a member of the Armed Services Committee; the Budget Committee; the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; the Environment and Public Works Committee; and the Rules Committee. He serves as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet.



The Bureau meets every spring in the Danish Parliament (*Folketing*).

General Committee Officers



General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

Following the 1991 Madrid Declaration, three committees were established along the lines of the three main “baskets” or sections of the Helsinki Final Act: The First General Committee on Political Affairs and Security; the Second General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment; and the Third General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Following debate and discussion, a draft resolution is adopted by each committee for presentation to the Annual Plenary Session of the Assembly, which is then included in the Final Declaration.

First General Committee

Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland)



was elected Chair of the First Committee in Minsk. He joined the Swiss Council of States in 1999 and is a member of the Christian Democrat Group representing the canton of Ticino. Within the Council of States he

serves as President of the Delegation to Maintain Relations with the Italian Parliament and as President of the Drafting Committee for Italian. He is a member of the Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He was appointed as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration following its inception in 2016. He is also the Head of Switzerland’s delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Guglielmo Picchi (Italy)



was elected Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security at the 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi and re-elected in Minsk. He has served in the Italian Parliament since 2006 and has been on the Italian Delegation to the OSCE

Parliamentary Assembly since 2008. He previously has worked in investment banking and served on the City Council of Florence from 1995 to 1999. He also serves as Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA’s Ad Hoc Committee on Migration.

Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria)



was elected Rapporteur of the First Committee in Minsk. In Bulgaria, Vigenin was Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2013-2014. Vigenin has served as a member of the Foreign Policy Committee and the European Affairs and Oversight of European

Funds Committee in the National Assembly of Bulgaria. He was previously a member of the European Parliament and was elected as the first EP Chair of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly in 2011. He has served since February 2016 as the Assembly’s Special Representative on the South Caucasus. He also serves as Deputy Head of the Bulgarian Delegation to the OSCE PA.

General Committee Officers



Second General Committee

Nilza Sena (Portugal)



was elected Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment at the 2016 Annual Session, after serving three terms as Vice-Chair. She was re-elected in Minsk A Member of the Portuguese Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2011,

Sena is also a founder and member of the Board of the Portuguese Platform for Sustainable Development and Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture. She is Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party and a Professor at the Technical University of Lisbon. She holds a Master's degree in Political Science and a PhD in Social Sciences in the specialty of sociology and has published numerous academic articles.

Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine)

was elected Vice-Chair of the Second Committee at the 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi and re-elected in Minsk. Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA, Gerasymov has a background in the private sector, serving as Deputy Director, Director and General Director



of Ukrainian Marketing Group. In 2014, he was elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament), where he serves as a member of the Committee on National Security and Defence, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Military-Industrial and Military-Technical Co-operation of the Verkhovna Rada Committee for Security and Defence Affairs.

Sofio Katsarava (Georgia)

was elected Rapporteur of the Second Committee at the 2017 Annual Session in Minsk. Elected to her national parliament in 2016, she serves on the Committee on European Integration and is Chairperson of the Foreign Relations Committee. She is Head of the Georgian Delegation to the OSCE PA and is also a member of delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. She is a member of Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia.



General Committee Officers



Third General Committee

Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Spain)



was elected Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions at the 2016 Annual Session in Tbilisi and re-elected in Minsk. Sanchez Amor is a member of the Spanish Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee

and serves as Head of the Spanish Delegation to the OSCE PA. Since 2012, he has also been the OSCE PA's Special Representative on OSCE Border Issues. Sanchez Amor was previously vice president of the Association of European Border Regions. He also held a seat in the regional Assembly of Extremadura and served as Deputy President of the government of the region, which is on the Spain-Portugal border.

Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic)

has served as Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions since being elected at the 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki. Dobesova serves as Head of the Delegation of the Czech Republic to the OSCE PA and has been a member of her national parliament since 2013. Within the



Czech Chamber of Deputies she is Vice-Chair of the Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and a member of the Committee on Petitions and the Sub-Committee on Migration. Dobesova also serves as a substitute member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. She has been an active participant in OSCE PA election observation activities since joining the Assembly, participating in missions to Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

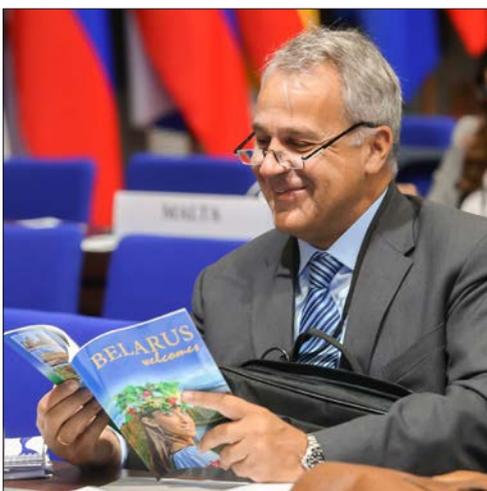
Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjiyianni (Cyprus)



was elected Rapporteur of the Third Committee at the 2016 Annual Session in Tbilisi and re-elected in Minsk. He has been a Member of the House of Representatives of Cyprus since 2006, where he serves as Chairman of the Parliamentary

Committee on Educational Affairs and Culture. He is also a Member of the Committee on Refugees-Enclaved, Missing and Adversely Affected Persons. He has previously served on his parliament's Committee on the Environment; the Committee on Energy, Trade, Industry, and Tourism; the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs; the Committee on Internal Affairs, and the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. He was also a member of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Union from 2003 to 2004.











Secretary General
Roberto Montella

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Roberto Montella, and has a permanent staff of 19, including three staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Deputy Secretary
General
Semyon Dzakhaev



Special
Representative
Andreas Nothelle



Chief of the
Executive Office
Andreas Baker



Head of Document
Services
Dana Bjerregaard



Liaison Officer and
Advisor
Marco Bonabello



Deputy Director of the
Vienna Liaison Office
Marc Carillet



Programme Officer
Farimah Daftary



Executive Assistant
Anna Di Domenico



Executive Assistant to
the Vienna Liaison Office
Tim Knoblaue



Head of Confer-
ence Services
Odile Lelarge



Senior Advisor
(consultant)
Kurt Lerras



General Services
Manager
Bo Hjorth Nielsen



Chief Political
Advisor
Francesco Pagani



Head of Communi-
cations and Press
Nat Parry



Chief ICT
Stephen Paul



Presidential Advisor
Loic Poulain



Head of Administration
for Election Observation
Iryna Sabashuk



Bringing together 323 parliamentarians from across the 57-nation OSCE region, including Europe, Asia and North America, the OSCE PA provides a forum for parliamentary dialogue, leads election observation missions, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, originally established by the 1990 Paris Summit to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, is the oldest continuing OSCE Institution.

The basic objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States;
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly employs a variety of means:

- A Final Declaration and a number of resolutions and recommendations are adopted each year at the Annual Session in July;
- Committee work addresses important contemporary international issues;
- Programmes and Seminars designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions to areas of latent or active crisis.



OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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