

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 29th Annual Session



2022
2-6 July

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Summary

The first in-person Annual Session in three years, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 29th Annual Session took place in Birmingham on 2-6 July 2022. The war in Ukraine was the main focus of debates and featured prominently in the Birmingham Declaration adopted on the final day of the session.

The Birmingham Declaration also covers COVID-19 economic recovery, migration and displacement, the situation in Afghanistan, human trafficking, cybersecurity, the elimination of nuclear weapons, pollution and climate change, freedom of the media and combating disinformation.

The Assembly adopted ten supplementary items covering issues such as the Arctic Region, combating violence against women journalists and politicians, ensuring the safety of journalists in conflict zones, the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, supporting victims of terrorism, accelerating the green energy transition, and promoting effective youth engagement towards inclusive and democratic societies.

Addressing nearly 250 parliamentarians gathered for the event, high-level OSCE officials and host dignitaries at the opening plenary on 2 July shared their observations from visiting Ukraine and meeting Ukrainian refugees, and urged full investigations and accountability for alleged war crimes and atrocities.

Speakers at the Annual Session included:

- Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth
- the Lord McFall of Alcluith, Lord Speaker
- Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons
- Head of the OSCE PA's UK Delegation John Whittingdale
- OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Poland Zbigniew Rau
- OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt
- OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid
- OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella

In the plenary session on 5 July, OSCE parliamentarians heard reports by Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Chair Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) and Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism Vice-Chair Kamil Aydin (Türkiye).

Numerous side events and meetings of ad hoc committees took place during the Annual Session, covering issues such as migration, counter-terrorism, prevention of war crimes, protests and repression in Russia and Belarus, safety of female journalists, youth in conflict zones, and parliamentary integrity. The Working Lunch on Gender Issues featured a discussion on ensuring that the post-pandemic recovery is gender-inclusive and equitable.

The PA elected its leadership for the coming year at the close of the session, including Vice-Presidents and Officers. President Margareta Cederfelt was re-elected for another term.



osce PA
BIRMINGHAM

29TH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE
OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

J U L Y 2 0 2 2



Opening Plenary Session

Chaired by President Cederfelt, the plenary session on 2 July was addressed by Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons; John Whittingdale, Head of the UK Delegation to the OSCE PA; Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth; and the Secretary General of the OSCE, Helga Maria Schmid. Sir Lindsay Hoyle warmly welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of the OSCE PA's work, followed by John Whittingdale who recalled the importance of the OSCE's founding principles, and stated his appreciation to be able to welcome the Ukrainian Delegation.

Opening Plenary Session



John Whittingdale, Head of the United Kingdom's Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Addressing nearly 250 parliamentarians gathered for the event, John Whittingdale denounced the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and urged international co-operation to ensure full investigations and accountability for alleged war crimes and atrocities.

"Now more than ever, co-operation on security is of paramount importance," said Whittingdale. "I am looking forward to a productive series of meetings and discussions with counterparts from across the OSCE. The organization's founding principles are the renunciation of the use of force, respect for sovereign and territorial integrity and protection of human rights and freedoms. These are especially important today as we work to create a safe and secure environment for all."

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon praised the devotion of the OSCE in working towards security in the political-military dimension, as well as promoting transparency, human rights, democracy, and environmental protection. He highlighted support provided to Ukraine and stated that the illegal war was "more than only against Ukraine, but also against the entire OSCE, its founding principles, pillars on which European security is based." Stating the importance of relying on efficient mechanisms to hold the Russian Federation accountable, Lord Ahmad highlighted the implementation of the Murad Code, which aims to enhance the pursuit of justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and its use in pursuing prosecution of war crimes in Ukraine.

Opening Plenary Session



President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Margareta Cederfelt

In her speech, OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) highlighted her visit earlier in the week to Kyiv, Bucha and Irpin – the sites of some of the worst violence in Russia's war against Ukraine. She described the destruction that she witnessed and regretted that as the war continues many more innocent people will be killed. "To our dear friends in the Ukrainian Delegation," she said, "my message

is clear: We stand with you. We will continue to defend your right to live in peace."

President Cederfelt emphasized that the OSCE PA's position has been consistent since the onset of hostilities in Ukraine in 2014: "We have

denounced the illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol since the beginning of military confrontation in eastern Ukraine.

We have consistently urged a resolution of the conflict through the full and good-faith implementation of the Minsk Agreements."

We stand with you. We will continue to defend your right to live in peace.

- President Margareta Cederfelt

Opening Plenary Session

Secretary General of the OSCE Helga Maria Schmid

OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid expressed her respect for the work done by the parliamentarians and emphasized the importance of the work of the OSCE in helping advance security and co-operation, especially in this time of conflict. She emphasized the importance of accountability and the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and called on participating States to keep the added value of the OSCE in focus. After recalling the existing threats in the OSCE area, including the situation in Afghanistan, new technologies, trafficking of vulnerable people, and gender inequality, the Secretary General highlighted the OSCE support to Ukraine and paid tribute to the work of field missions for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Supplementary Items

The Compromise Supplementary Item “The Russian Federation’s War of Aggression Against Ukraine and Its People, and Its Threat to Security Across the OSCE Region,” principally sponsored by Vilija Aleknaite Abramikienė (Lithuania), Mykyta Poturaiev (Ukraine) and Roger Wicker (United States), was agreed to in the plenary session.

The resolution condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing violations of Helsinki principles and fundamental principles of international law by the Russian Federation in its war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as the complicity of Belarus, and calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities, as well as the establishment of effective legal mechanisms to prosecute war crimes.





Standing Committee Meeting

The meeting of the Standing Committee on 2 July began with introductory remarks by the President of the OSCE PA, Margareta Cederfelt, in which she welcomed all the delegations and participants. She thanked the UK Parliament for its hospitality in hosting the 2022 Annual Session.

OSCE PA Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) presented her report, in which she outlined the main security challenges and hazards in the OSCE region and activities undertaken by the President. The President presented the outcomes of visits to Central Asia, Ukraine, the United States, and the Polish-Ukrainian and Moldovan-Ukrainian borders.

In addition, President Cederfelt emphasized that with the onset of the Russian's Federation invasion of Ukraine, all efforts have been focused on bringing this war to an end, as well as addressing the humanitarian and economic consequences. In conclusion, she underscored the vital need for international co-operation and expressed gratitude to the delegations for their dedicated participation in all meetings and activities in the field.

OSCE PA Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen (Denmark) presented his report, providing an overview of the financial situation and the status of annual contributions. In particular, he mentioned that the war in Ukraine has posed numerous economic challenges, causing inflation and many other variables which inevitably affect budget matters. The Treasurer stressed though that it is the primary goal to increase efficiency in order to reduce the burden on the taxpayers. Following the report presenta-

tion, the budget for the 2022-2023 Financial Year was adopted.

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella presented his report, emphasizing that the Assembly's activities have been significantly impacted by the unprecedented circumstances and naturally focused on the war in Ukraine, which is probably the most severe security challenge the OSCE has faced in the organization's history. On this point, he drew attention to the need for refocusing the principles and values on which the organization was founded, while it is crucial to preserve the PA as a platform for dialogue on issues of global importance.

During the open debate on the current international political issues, a range of mounting security and political issues were discussed, as well as ongoing concerns about challenges in the human dimension.

The ongoing war in Ukraine dominated the debate, with much focus on a proposed change to the Rules of Procedure to enable restrictions to be placed on OSCE PA delegations that have violated the territorial integrity of other OSCE countries. Numerous statements concluded that this war paved the way for many security issues and problems for the whole of Europe, Central Asia and other areas of the OSCE region. Many delegations also reiterated their support for the sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters.

Among the items raised were the deteriorat-

Standing Committee Meeting



ing ecological situation in Central Asia and its implications on social and economic developments, backsliding in the human dimension and the need for a democratic reboot, and transnational threats. Many delegates stressed that the OSCE should remain the key platform to address the issues of comprehensive security, while the PA was acknowledged as an inclusive and valuable platform for parliamentary dialogue and co-operation.

The OSCE PA's Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine, Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), noted that the time for dialogue has not arrived yet, however, parliamentarians

should ensure that everything is prepared within the OSCE PA to make sure that all instruments are put in place to revitalize the dialogue once there is a conducive environment for this.

Ahead of the preparations for the upcoming PA activities, it was highlighted that the Autumn Meeting will focus on the matters of the security of the Black Sea region and hybrid threats. In addition, it was preliminarily agreed that the next Annual Sessions of 2023 and 2024 will be held in Vancouver and Bucharest, respectively.

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

The General Committee on Political Affairs and Security met in four sessions, chaired by Richard Hudson (United States), from 3 July to 5 July. Members considered the report and resolution proposed by Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) and three supplementary items. The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Zbigniew Rau, addressed the committee on 4 July.



General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

Committee Chair Richard Hudson (United States) opened the meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs and Security on 3 July. Hudson began by expressing regret at the absence of Belarus and the Russian Federation yet noted that the war in Ukraine must end before both delegations can regain their standing within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In doing so, Hudson welcomed the PA's efforts to address the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, most notably with the appointment of Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine, Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) and Special Rapporteur on War Crimes, John Whittingdale (United Kingdom). Hudson concluded his remarks by introducing Committee Rapporteur Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) and announcing the three supplementary items to be considered during the committee meeting.

Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) began by voicing concern at the unprecedented deterioration in the security situation across the OSCE region, stressing that ongoing aggression against Ukraine, alongside other ongoing protracted conflicts, have now forced the OSCE to re-evaluate its position as well as make itself more resilient to future threats and challenges.

Kasciunas raised concern over the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, including record numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as mounting allegations of war crimes, calling for all those responsible to face justice in an international tribunal. Kasciunas also insisted that international sanctions remain in place until Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial



General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

integrity, within its internationally recognized borders, is fully restored.

Kasciunas noted concern over ongoing protracted conflicts in Moldova and the South Caucasus, calling for the swift and full implementation of agreed upon ceasefires as well as for all sides to the conflicts to engage constructively in all ongoing resolution efforts. Rapporteur Kasciunas also expressed concern over emerging border security threats such as transnational organized crime, weapons trafficking, and the instrumentalization of the irregular flows of migrants. By the same token, Kasciunas also pointed towards hybrid threats such as the weaponization of energy supplies, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns as requiring immediate attention.

In closing, the Rapporteur emphasized that addressing the current issues the entire OSCE region is facing requires greater co-operation and engagement among participating States as well as among all OSCE structures and institutions. The committee resolution passed with an overwhelming majority after consideration of nine amendments, of which six were adopted.

Supplementary Items

The first supplementary item entitled “Victims of Terrorism,” principally sponsored by Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), called for greater attention to be paid to the victims of terrorism in their role as active agents in counter-terrorism efforts, calling on all OSCE participating States to establish crisis response teams specifically for victims. Two amendments were considered to the supplementary item and both were adopted. The item was adopted with an overwhelming majority.

The second item, on “The Arctic Region,” principally sponsored by Bryndís Haraldsdóttir (Iceland), called for special attention to be paid to the Arctic, most notably by mitigating the effects of climate change on the region as well as preventing its militarization. One amendment was proposed to the item, which was rejected. The supplementary item passed with overwhelming support.

The third and final supplementary item on “Youth Engagement,” principally sponsored by Farah Karimi (Netherlands), focused on the disproportionate effects of security challenges on youth, calling for enhanced youth inclusion to ensure resilience and address specific needs as well as for the creation of an OSCE Youth Plan of Action. One amendment was proposed to the item, which was accepted. The supplementary item was likewise adopted with overwhelming support.

Election of Officers

Chair: Richard Hudson (United States)

Vice-Chair: Costel Neculai Dunava (Romania)

Rapporteur: Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania)



General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

Committee Chair Pere Joan Pons (Spain) chaired the four sessions of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment during the Annual Session in Birmingham. Members considered the report and resolution proposed by Gudrun Kugler (Austria) and three supplementary items on establishing a code of conduct for Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the OSCE area, and accelerating the green energy transition.



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Interpreting Channels

1. ENG: English Английский
2. FRE: French Français Французский
3. GER: German Deutsch Немецкий
4. ITA: Italian Italiano Итальянский
5. SPA: Spanish Español Испанский
6. RUS: Russian Русse Русский



General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

In his opening remarks, Committee Chair Pere Joan Pons (Spain) stressed that the concept of economic and environmental security is more critical than ever, especially considering recent developments. He also underlined that promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through sound and sustainable economic and environmental policies is the only way forward. In doing so, he encouraged parliamentarians to

invest heavily in greening their economies and making their economic development models more sustainable, fair, solidary, and safe.

Furthermore, he advocated

for mitigating the impact of climate change and environmental degradation as "there is no global security without climate security." Finally, he urged a transition that is centered around renewable sources of energy to be decisively embraced.


Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Gudrun Kugler (Austria) presented her report and resolution, which focus on

the economic and social repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic challenges, economic interdependence, migration management, combating human trafficking, and fighting corruption. Moreover, her report and resolution cover issues including sustainable development, climate change, clean energy transition, environmental protection, as well as artificial intelligence and digitalization.

Referring to the committee as "the future committee," Kugler emphasized that the issues that it is tackling are strongly linked to security, noting that several of the key crises of our time concern the economic

and environmental dimension. She also highlighted the particular challenges of the war in Ukraine and detrimental effects on people, economy, and environment. Emphasizing that there is a need to also focus on topics that are not on the front pages of newspapers and to develop new ideas in these areas, Kugler expressed hope that the resolution would be utilized in the national parliaments in relevant committees, noting that "parliamentarians are drivers of change."



Without peace and freedom in the European region, fair and sustainable socio-economic growth for our countries is unattainable, thereby further exacerbating an already precarious security situation.

- Second Committee Report



Dozens of parliamentarians took the floor to debate the resolution, emphasizing issues related to environmental and climate protection, the urgency of the green energy transition, food and energy security, the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, and sustainable economic recovery. Following the debate and the discussions over 17 submitted amendments, the resolution was adopted with overwhelming support.

Supplementary Items

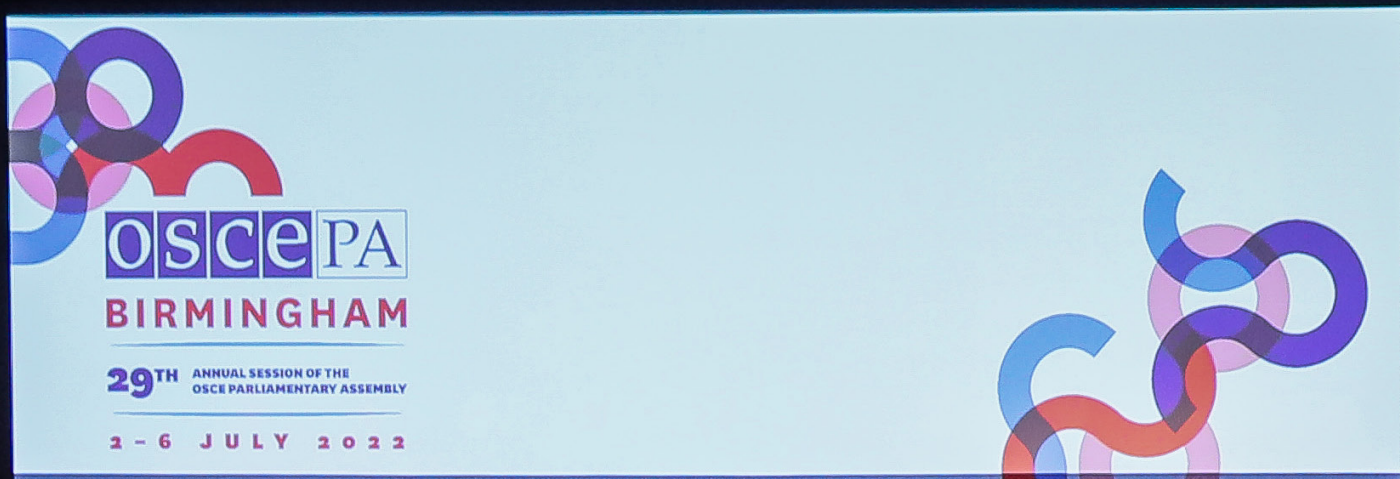
Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) presented the supplementary item she authored, "Code of Conduct for Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly," which aims at enhancing the institutional framework that supports transparency, accountability, and integrity. Among other points, the resolution calls on OSCE PA Members to exercise their duties with integrity, declare any conflicts of interest, and use the resources available to them responsibly. The item was adopted unanimously.

The Second Committee considered the supplementary item "Implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the OSCE Area" principally sponsored by Askar Shakirov (Kazakhstan), who underlined that the OSCE mandate is linked to all 17 Goals and five pillars of the Agenda and, as such, noted the essence of enhanced co-operation to accelerating sustainable solutions. With overwhelming support, the resolution was adopted with two amendments.

The committee also took up the item "Accelerating the Green Energy Transition," principally sponsored by John Aldag (Canada), which inspired a fruitful and lively debate on the need to accelerate collective action to fight climate change, invest in research on carbon capture and storage technologies, ensure just and sustainable transition based on renewable energy and set ambitious targets to reach net zero. The item was adopted with overwhelming support.

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Committee Vice-Chair Michael Georg Link (Germany) chaired one meeting of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions during the Annual Session. Lord Alf Dubs (United Kingdom) was appointed honorary Chair of the Third Committee, chairing the remaining three meetings. In addition to the main resolution, three supplementary items were adopted. The main resolution and subsequent debate centered on a range of issues, including the war in Ukraine, freedom of expression, and minorities' rights.



General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Michael Georg Link (Germany) welcomed the committee on behalf of the former Chair, Sereine Mauborgne, who was no longer serving as a Member of Parliament. The Vice-Chair presented an overview of the committee's upcoming work, including the supplementary items on the agenda. He also presented a report on the committee's work during the previous year, noting that the committee leadership had been vocal on issues of concern, particularly related to the war in Ukraine, as well as the human rights situation in Belarus. He reported on a visit of the committee leaders to Warsaw earlier in the year and highlighted the ongoing good co-operation that the PA enjoys with the OSCE/ODIHR.

Report and Resolution

Rapporteur Johan Büser (Sweden) presented his report, highlighting the massive humanitarian consequences of the conflict in Ukraine, the shrinking of the public sphere in many countries, the growing socio-economic inequalities, minority rights, pushbacks, and freedom of the media, of expression and of assembly. He emphasized the key role of parliamentarians in supporting the effective implementation of human rights for every category of people within society, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Parliamentarians took the floor raising issues such



General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions



as the impact of conflict on human rights, destruction of cultural property, territorial integrity, food insecurity, and ethnic cleansing. Another point raised was related to freedom of the media and of expression, including the protection of journalists and the rise of online extremism. Committee members also discussed the rights of minorities, of refugees and of women.

Following the debate, the committee members discussed the 16 proposed amendments to the draft resolution and it was subsequently adopted.

Supplementary Items

The committee took up the resolution “Combating Violence against Women Journalists and Politicians”, sponsored by Hedy Fry (Canada), and presented by Gwen Boniface (Canada). In her presentation Boniface voiced concern over the widespread violence against women journalists and politicians, and the lack of data pertaining to this issue inside the OSCE area. The supplementary item was adopted without amendments.

Grzegorz Bierecki (Poland) presented the supplementary item on “The Importance of the Human Dimension in the Context of Current Threats to Security in the OSCE Area Stemming from the Russian Aggression against Ukraine”, emphasizing the destructive impact on Human Rights of the Russian Federation’s attack. Following a debate, the supplementary item was adopted with four amendments.

The third supplementary item, “Ensuring the Safety of Journalists in Conflict Zones”, was proposed by John Whittingdale (United Kingdom). Highlighting the specific targeting of journalists in conflicts and the need to fight disinformation, the sponsor drew particular attention to the memory of journalists killed during the war in Ukraine. This supplementary item was adopted without amendments.

Election of Officers

Chair: Nikoloz Samkharadze (Georgia)
Vice-Chair: Farah Karimi (Netherlands)
Rapporteur: Johan Büser (Sweden)

Working Lunch on Gender Issues

Every year at the Annual Session, a working lunch is held on the margins to bring OSCE parliamentarians together for a focused discussion on gender issues in the OSCE area. The event typically features a presentation by local and national figures, followed by a thematic discussion by participants.


Hosted by OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) and Caroline Nokes (United Kingdom), and introduced by Patricia Bovey (Canada), the 2022 Working

Lunch on Gender Issues focused on "Ensuring a Gender-Inclusive Economic Recovery from the COVID19 Pandemic."

Following a welcome address by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and a presentation by

Danijela Djurovic, member of the Delegation of Montenegro to the OSCE PA and President of the Parliament of Montenegro, participants at the lunch held a wide-ranging discussion on what concrete actions parliamentarians can take to ensure that their countries' post-pandemic recovery are gender-inclusive and sustainable. Discussing challenges and sharing best practices, participants recognized that

the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women, and explored policy proposals for an equitable economic recovery.



As governments move along a path of economic recovery, they have an opportunity to adopt gender-inclusive approaches, an opportunity which they should seize by placing women's economic empowerment front and center of their economic recovery plans.

- OSCE PA Gender Report 2022

Participants also discussed Special Representative Fry's 2022 Annual Report, which recalls the importance of ensuring that during this time of crisis and shifting budgetary priorities, that the in-

ternational community does not lose sight of gender as a cross-cutting issue. Gender considerations must be an integral part of emergency responses, the Fry's report maintains.

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella also spoke at the Gender Lunch, emphasizing the importance of women's participation in the PA and gender mainstreaming in the OSCE.



Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

Opening the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration on 3 July, Committee Chair and Vice-President Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria) welcomed members, guests from the delegations of Ukraine, Poland, Romania, as well as the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey.

The Chair reported on the committee's field visit to Greece in March, highlighting significant improvements in the country's handling of refugee flows, including by constructing new facilities, but noted that there is always room for improvement. He highlighted for example that there appeared to be issues in relation to prolonged stays in the new centres. The Chair drew the attention of members to the recommendations contained in the draft report.

Members then discussed the draft report and suggested a number of modifications.

Vigenin presented an initiative to gauge the response to the wave of Ukrainian refugees in the OSCE region, noting that the response from a questionnaire distributed to OSCE participating States had been positive. Some examples of good practice were also referred to in the Migration Committee report prepared for the Birmingham Annual Session, he noted. A Ukrainian delegate, attending the meeting as an observer, thanked the Chair for his report and expressed his gratitude to partners around the world who are providing support and hosting Ukrainian refugees.

In a discussion on the Ukrainian refugee crisis, a delegate from Poland, also attending as an observer, noted that over a million Ukrainian refugees are currently staying in Poland, about half of the total number of refugees. They are provided

with social benefits, but a long-term approach is needed, it was stressed. Romanian and Czech parliamentarians also reported on the efforts taking place in their countries.

OSCE SR/CTHB Valiant Richey highlighted the importance of identifying and mitigating the risks of trafficking in human beings as a result of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Based on the recent analysis of ads about Ukrainian women on the internet and activities of traffickers, the SR/CTHB drew attention to the recommendations of his office emphasizing immediate prevention measures and the response to pressing needs stemming from the war in Ukraine.

In the discussion, the need to safeguard children in the context of migration flows was stressed. Concerns over implications of the food crisis on Africa and subsequent foreseeable migration influxes were also raised. One member also underlined the need to provide psychological support to refugees and to document human rights violations.

Richey underscored that the best way to address the risk of trafficking in human beings in the context of the Ukrainian refugee crisis is through institutional sustainability and a structured response, for instance, by establishing a committee on migration in parliament, or a task force in the government. He also recommended drawing upon the OSCE which can provide technical assistance. The benefits of sharing good practices among participating States were also highlighted.

Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism

The CCT met on 3 July on the margins of the Annual Session in Birmingham. The meeting was chaired by Chair Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) and reviewed the latest trends, as well as implemented and upcoming activities. The CCT also discussed the supplementary item on Victims of Terrorism, principally sponsored by Lopatka.

Chair Lopatka underlined the dire implications of the war in Ukraine, expressing that while what we are witnessing is not related to terrorism, the very concept of hybrid warfare is rather vague. He highlighted pressing concerns, including cyber attacks and destabilization of the broader region, with instability likely exploited by terrorist groups. He also expressed concerns over the alarming developments in the Sahel region, dramatic changes in the security landscape in Afghanistan, and a worrying increase in extremism, fueled by a rise in violent ideology and conspiracy theories spread online. Against this backdrop, he underlined the key role of parliamentarians in promoting policy convergence and building critical support for well co-ordinated, coherent, and human rights-compliant counter-terrorism responses.

Furthermore, Lopatka reported on the CCT's contributions to the UNOCT Annual Forum of Beneficiaries of Technical Assistance, along with the Conference on Legislative Frameworks in Africa in March, the UNOCT Side Event on Engaging Parliamentarians with Civil Society Organizations in Enhancing Legislation and Oversight Functions on Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism in May, the High-Level Conference on Parliamentary Support to Victims of Terrorism in Rome, and the OSCE Security Briefing for Representatives of Legislative Authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Notably, he also gave an overview of the PA's

contribution to the Second Co-ordination Meeting among Parliamentary Assemblies on Counter-Terrorism Matters in Naples where, in recognition of the solid engagement since 2017, the OSCE PA was elected as the first President of this new mechanism, for a one-year term.

During the debate, members of the committee underlined the importance of benchmarking and enhanced co-operation, as well as sharing information and lessons learned in countering terrorism. They also emphasized that radicalization and terrorism know no boundaries and, as such, need strong political will and co-ordination among all stakeholders to be effectively addressed. In addition to reviewing their upcoming activities, the committee also considered opportunities for expanding co-operation with relevant stakeholders in the field and organizing an official visit to one of the States represented in the CCT.

Finally, discussions focused on the supplementary item on Victims of Terrorism being considered in Birmingham, with Chair Lopatka underlining that the resolution actively promotes policy convergence around the complex needs of the victims of terrorism and encourages States to integrate these provisions into their counter-terrorism policies and practices.



Plenary Sessions

Chaired by President Margareta Cederfelt, A plenary session held on 5 July featured reports on priority issues for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, including migration, counter-terrorism, corruption, climate change, human trafficking, civil society engagement, digitalization, youth engagement, the Arctic, South East Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. Chairs of the ad hoc committees presented reports, which were followed by interventions by Special Representatives and an active discussion on early voting procedures within the Assembly.



Kristian Vigenin, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and OSCE PA Vice-President

The report prepared by Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Chair Kristian Vigenin provided an overview of the current migration challenges while paying special attention to Afghanistan and irregular migration issues in other regions. He also stressed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated the dramatic influx of displaced people and refugees, adding that this crisis has impacted the whole of the OSCE region.

Special Representatives

Several reports were presented by OSCE PA Special Representatives, with the Special Representative on Arctic Issues, Bryndís Haraldsdóttir, highlighting the deteriorating situation in the Arctic. Climate change, she said, jeopardizes the living conditions and the very survival of indigenous people in that area. Special Representative on Central Asia and Vice-President Pia Kauma reported on the unfolding issues within the three dimensions of security in Central Asia which were triggered by the war in Afghanistan.

We should not lose sight of long-term trends and continuity in the region.

- Special Representative on Central Asia Pia Kauma

Reinhold Lopatka, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism and OSCE PA Vice-President

In the report of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, attention was given to the implications of the Russian Federation's war in Ukraine on the issue of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism. In addition, Chair Lopatka spoke about the advent of cyber warfare and hybrid tools that have paved the way for new terrorism threats. In conclusion, it was stated that there is a need for further strengthening of counterterrorism activities including within the OSCE PA.

Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides described her activities and underscored that the development of the actionable legislative framework and national policies will ensure the full transparency, oversight and accountability of parliaments.

In addition, she reminded participants that co-operation with specialized bodies and international organizations is crucial in this fight against corruption.

Special Representative on South Caucasus and Vice-President Kari Henriksen drew attention to the implications of the war in Ukraine on the South Caucasus region and also underlined the importance of addressing outstanding and long-running issues, such as the occupation of Georgia's territories by the Russian Federation.

In her capacity as the Special Representative on Youth Engagement, Farah Karimi stressed that

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many unfolding crises have accentuated the vulnerabilities of youth, especially those who endure the consequence of the unfolding conflicts, wars and climate change. She added that the establishment of the network of young parliamentarians is critical and it is important to engage them with the PA's activities.

The heads of recent PA election observation missions presented the main findings of their activities pertaining to the election situation in Serbia and Hungary in 2022.

Open Debate

In the open debate, Members spoke about the key role that national parliaments play in ensuring implementation of OSCE commitments, expressed their support for ending the war in Ukraine, and highlighted the importance of dialogue within the Parliamentary Assembly. Participants emphasized the need for humanitarian relief, more effective sanctions, ensuring accountability for war crimes and the prevention of impunity, and to plan for the successful reconstruction of the country.

I believe in the value of our partnerships within the OSCE and with the Organization's Parliamentary Assembly. They enable us to join forces in the defense of our common values.

- OSCE Chairman-in-Office
Zbigniew Rau

OSCE parliamentarians debated topics including gender equality, freedom of the press, and



Plenary Sessions

protection of minorities. Other topics of discussion included ensuring youth participation in the OSCE PA as well as in broader political institutions and decision-making structures, and responding effectively to food insecurity. Many delegations stressed the need to respect internationally recognized borders, human rights and freedoms, trust between countries, and international obligations.

Adoption of the Birmingham Declaration

The open debate was followed by the voting procedure to adopt one by one the resolutions of the three committees and the ten supplementary items, which together comprise the Birmingham Declaration. Parliamentarians adopted the Declaration by an overwhelming majority.

Announcement of Election Results

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) was re-elected along with Vice-Presidents. The new Vice-Presidents include

Irene Charalambides (Cyprus), Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom), Pere Joan Pons (Spain), and Michael Georg Link (Germany).

The election results were announced at the closing plenary session, which also included addresses by the Lord Speaker McFall of Alcluith and OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella.

Closing Remarks

In his remarks, the Lord Speaker expressed solidarity with the people of Ukraine and urged resolution of the conflict. He also highlighted challenges such as climate change and stressed that it is up to parliamentarians to scrutinize the work of governments on the global stage.

In her closing remarks, President Cederfelt thanked the OSCE parliamentarians for their support and emphasized the need for following up on the recommendations included in the Birmingham Declaration.



Birmingham Declaration

In the Birmingham Declaration, OSCE parliamentarians voted to condemn the Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms, and to call on Russia "to establish an immediate ceasefire and withdraw Russian troops from the whole of Ukraine." The Declaration encourages the intensification of results-oriented mediation efforts and negotiations in the framework of the existing platforms for conflict resolution, and calls on the parties to conflicts to immediately cease all hostilities and engage in dialogue to achieve comprehensive and long-lasting peace.

It urges all nuclear-armed and allied States to implement the no-first-use declarations and agreements, and further reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines; to refrain from exploiting the vulnerabilities of cyberspace and to continue the work on implementing confidence-building measures across all OSCE participating States.

The Declaration also "calls on all participating States to leverage the potential of women and young people in their equal engagement with security and peace efforts and their overall integration in the decision-making process and institution-building."

It "reiterates its call on all OSCE participating States to redouble their efforts to identify and pursue co-operative solutions to our common economic and environmental security challenges, including those related to economic recovery, connectivity, migration, trafficking in human beings, good governance, climate change, environmental degradation, pollution, cybersecurity and disinformation", in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Condemning all forms of discrimination, it urges

all participating States to adopt a gender-inclusive approach to economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that "recovery policies incorporate an intersectional gender lens and take account of the views of diverse groups of stakeholders, including women's organizations and marginalized groups." It also encourages parliaments to take action to fight human trafficking, enhance public authorities transparency and accountability, and implement advanced anti-corruption legislation.

Urging a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, the Declaration firmly condemns the targeting of civilians, the destruction of cultural heritage, food insecurity, and calls for a thorough investigation of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Declaration also urges participating states to place the well-being of vulnerable people at the centre of policy responses, and to empower women in ameliorating possibilities for their equal participation in the political and public life of their communities. It also reaffirms the importance of non-governmental organizations and an independent judiciary, and "condemns the efforts in a number of participating States to undermine [this] independence, as a systemic attack on people's full enjoyment of their human rights."

Expressing concern over the impact of disinformation, the Declaration asks all OSCE participating States to take action with regard to hate crimes, ensure the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration, online and offline, and deplores that women politicians and journalists are regularly subjected to harassment and discrimination.

In addition to the three general committee resolutions, the Assembly adopted ten supplementary items covering a wide range of topics.





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