

The state of the OSCE at 50, situation in Middle East in focus in plenary



President Pia Kauma chairs the plenary session on 2 July.

Chaired by President Pia Kauma (Finland), Wednesday's plenary session featured speeches by OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirlioğlu and OSCE/ODIHR Director Maria Telalian, followed by a Q&A session, as well as general debates on the situation in the Middle East and the state of the OSCE 50 years after Helsinki. The wide-ranging debates touched on a variety of issues and are available in full on the OSCE PA's website.

In his remarks, Secretary General Sinirlioğlu underscored that the Parliamentary Assembly plays a critical role in promoting shared principles and commitments and ensuring that the OSCE remains an effective platform for dialogue and action. The OSCE, he

said, offers a foundation for a safer, more stable future.

Director Telalian focused her remarks on the upcoming 50th anniversary of the OSCE, reflecting on the challenges to international relations and the legal and political framework that ensures respect for human rights. She welcomed the co-operation that has been developed between the PA and ODIHR on election observation, and noted that members of parliament play a vital role in ensuring that fundamental freedoms are upheld.

OSCE parliamentarians also heard addresses by NATO PA President Marcos Perestrello and President of PACE Theodoros Rousopoulos, who offered perspectives on the state of European security. Also in the plenary session, parliamentarians adopted the supplementary item "Securing the Stability of the Parliamentary Assembly's Financial Situation," principally sponsored by Treasurer Johan Buser (Sweden). The resolution urges changes in the OSCE PA's scales of financial contributions and tasks the Treasurer to spearhead a process of reform to ensure the long-term sustainability and functioning of the OSCE PA's core activities.

General Committees complete work and elect leaders for 2025-2026



Counting ballots in the First Committee, 2 July

The First Committee on Wednesday resumed its consideration of supplementary items, amending and adopting "Preventing Youth Radicalization to Violent Extremism and Terrorism through Education and Media and Information Literacy," principally sponsored by Kamil Aydin (Türkiye), with strong support. The SI "Maritime Security: An Integral Part of the OSCE's Comprehensive Security," principally sponsored by Ville Kaunisto (Finland), was adopted unanimously without amendment. "Supporting Moldova's Independence and Democracy," principally sponsored by Pawel Zalewski (Poland), was adopted overwhelmingly with one amendment.

Wrapping up its work, the committee elected the following officers: Chair Marc Veasey (United States), Vice-Chair Jevrosima Pejovic (Montenegro), and Rapporteur Tobias Winkler (Germany).

The Second Committee adopted "Strengthening Parliamentary Diplomacy and Co-operation to Safeguard Future Generations," principally sponsored by Farah Karimi (Netherlands), unamended and with a large majority. The committee completed its work by re-electing Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) as Chair, Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) as Vice-Chair, and Paula Cardoso (Portugal) as Rapporteur.

The Third Committee adopted "Supporting Democracy and OSCE Values in Georgia," principally sponsored by Pawel Zalewski (Poland), with one amendment and strong support. The committee then elected Sargis Khandanyan (Armenia) as Chair, Baroness Christine Blower (United Kingdom) as Vice-Chair, and Carina Ödebrink (Sweden) as Rapporteur.

Side events explore role of young conflict mediators and new technologies in elections

Co-hosted by OSCE/ODIHR Director Maria Telalian and OSCE PA Third Committee Rapporteur Carina Ödebrink, a side event on Wednesday explored the growing role of digital technologies in elections. Keynote speakers noted that while these technologies have had some benefits, they have also led to new challenges, including the increasing use of hate speech, inauthentic behaviour online, and the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation. As international election observers, the ODIHR and OSCE PA must incorporate new methodologies to assess governments' preparedness for safeguarding the online space and the effectiveness of efforts to counter misuse, participants said.

Meaningful participation of young mediators in peace, democracy-building, and conflict resolution was the focus of another side event on Wednesday. Organized by Federica Onori (Italy) and featuring the participation of young parliamentarians, civil society activists, and OSCE officials, the event explored the critical role of young mediators in fostering dialogue, preventing violence, and strengthening democratic resilience. OSCE Chair-in-Office Special Representative on Youth, Peace and Security Santeri Leinonen offered opening remarks, noting that young people often act as intermediaries in conflict-affected and polarized societies. Participants also highlighted ways to improve policies and practices to enhance youth participation.