

OSCE PA hearing focuses on prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of FTFs



A hearing organized by the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) on Tuesday focused on the challenge of repatriating, prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating foreign terrorist fighters. The event examined the experience of Kazakhstan as a case study for lessons learned and good practices.

In his opening remarks, CCT Chair Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) said that terrorism and violent extremism represent multi-dimensional challenges that require multi-dimensional responses, as well as strong international networking and co-operation among governments. Briefing the PA on Kazakhstan's experience with

FTFs were representatives from the ministries of foreign affairs, education, information, and internal affairs. The Kazakhstani representatives described the challenges of balancing the needs for law enforcement and prevention with the long-term strategies of reintegration and rehabilitation. They provided background to CCT members on the political and diplomatic groundwork required for such repatriations, the decision-making process, and the de-radicalization programmes in place for the returnees, including in places of detention.

In the discussion, CCT members commended Kazakhstan's counter-terrorism efforts, raised several follow-up questions and reiterated the urgency to address the issue of FTFs throughout the OSCE region through effective prosecution and rehabilitation of both FTFs and their family members, especially women and children, noting the negative social perception towards returnees in many countries. Closing the meeting, Secretary General Roberto Montella thanked the Kazakhstani authorities for sharing their experience and best practices. The hearing was organized with the support of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, represented during the meeting by Volker Frobarth.

PA holds event with ODIHR and OSCE Secretariat on improving legislation to prevent gender-based violence

An event today organized by the OSCE PA, the OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Secretariat's Gender Issues Programme explored innovative legislative approaches to prevent and combat violence against women. More than a hundred participants registered for the event, with half of them MPs. OSCE parliamentarians were joined by OSCE delegates from participating States and Partners for Co-operation for an exchange of good practices and lessons learned.

In opening remarks, OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) talked about the tools available for combating gender-based violence, one of which is using data to inform legislation and policymaking. Before making legislation, she stressed, it is important to meet with civil society to learn about women's lived experiences, in order to ensure

effective policy changes.

Also addressing the event were OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid and ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci. Experts from the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR presented OSCE tools and resources, including ODIHR's support to lawmaking processes and developing legal reviews of legislation on violence against women, and the OSCE Secretariat's guide on How to Use Survey Data to Prevent and Combat Violence against Women and Girls.

Participants recalled that OSCE participating States are committed to preventing violence against women and girls, with Ministerial Council Decisions adopted in 2005, 2014 and 2018 that call on participating States to improve national legislation, policies and practices in this regard.

OSCE PA SG addresses IPA CIS conference on election technologies and observation

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella addressed the Commonwealth of Independent States Interparliamentary Assembly (IPA CIS)'s Conference Technologies of Electoral Process and Monitoring of Elections on 13 May. In his remarks, Montella pointed out that OSCE PA election observation is grounded in the commitments that all OSCE participating States, which include all CIS countries, made in the 1990 Copenhagen Document. Montella noted that although the CIS and OSCE do

not formally collaborate in election observation missions due to different criteria applied to their assessment procedures, the PA and IPA CIS enjoy strong co-operation, often meeting and exchanging views during the process of observation. He also noted that the use of technologies have allowed the PA to innovate its methodology for EOMs, which has enabled it to deploy almost 250 people for seven observation missions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DSG Nothelle highlights parliamentarians' role in conflict prevention at OSCE seminar

The OSCE PA's Special Representative in Vienna, Deputy Secretary General Andreas Nothelle, represented the Assembly at the OSCE Chairpersonship's three-day Conflict Cycle Seminar this week. The seminar, entitled, "Ten years after Vilnius – Advancing an inclusive 'whole-of-OSCE' approach to prevent violent conflict and build sustainable peace," featured high-level participation and focused on how to ensure the coherent implementation of the OSCE's tools for conflict prevention and resolution.

Nothelle spoke at Monday's working session focused on advancing a 'whole-of-OSCE' approach to early warning and conflict prevention, noting that parliamentarians and the parliamentary institution of the OSCE bring added value to overall OSCE efforts. As noted in the 2011 MC Decision adopted in Vilnius on the conflict

cycle, a comprehensive, cross-dimensional response is required to address the multi-faceted causes of crises and conflicts, Nothelle pointed out. This demands co-ordination between OSCE executive structures, field operations, and the PA.

"Many of the PA's members are well connected with important parts of the societies in our countries," Nothelle said. "Through debates in our Assembly and draft decisions proposed by our members, but also, less formally, in private talks between members, we become aware of issues long before they reach the stage of official intergovernmental discussions." He added that OSCE PA meetings offer opportunities for dialogue between conflicting parties and parliamentarians benefit from discussing issues openly and hearing varying views of colleagues.