

PA President and SG brief European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee on OSCE work

President Peter Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) and Secretary General Roberto Montella addressed the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) on 26 May. The meeting was chaired by David McAllister (Germany) and featured participation by a number of former OSCE parliamentarians, including Isabel Santos (Portugal), Nacho Sanchez Amor (Spain), and Tonino Picula (Croatia).

In his opening remarks, President Bowness welcomed the institutional co-operation that has been facilitated by the engagement of former leaders of the OSCE PA who sit on the AFET, and provided an overview of the Assembly's work for those less familiar with the PA. He highlighted in particular fact-finding visits, election observation and conflict mediation as areas of common interest

between the EP and OSCE PA.

In response to questions on issues such as transatlantic relations, challenges facing Eastern Europe and election observation, Bowness stressed the importance of building inter-parliamentary co-operation, in particular between EU and OSCE, but said that what is ultimately needed is stronger engagement from governments. He noted that on election observation, follow-up is needed to ensure adherence to democratic commitments.

Montella said that the PA is working to strengthen the OSCE in order to better deliver to its end users. He also appealed to the EP to refrain from creating a new election observation institution but advocated a policy aiming at strengthening the ODIHR, and building co-operation within its established methodology.

OSCE's current state of affairs of in focus at Heads of Institutions retreat in Denmark



Matteo Mecacci (right) speaks at the Helsingor retreat, 1 June 2021.

Upon invitation by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, the five OSCE Heads of Institution met for a two-day retreat in Helsingor, Denmark, on 31 May and 1 June. Participants included OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci, RFoM Teresa Ribeiro, and HCNM Kairat Abdrakhmanov, as well as senior staff.

The event served as an opportunity to informally discuss the strength of the OSCE, reflected in inclusiveness and its comprehensive approach to security. Participants discussed at length the current state of affairs in the OSCE, with particular focus given to how to make use of the unique OSCE's tools to respond to ongoing challenges affecting the international security agenda. They reviewed internal co-ordination mechanisms and exchanged views on how the organization can continue to deliver on its mandate, particularly in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of strengthening multilateral co-operation was also reiterated.

Prior to the retreat in Helsingor, Mecacci met with Montella and his team at the International Secretariat to discuss co-operation on election observation and democratization.

OSCE parliamentarians discuss importance of involving youth in decision-making

Young parliamentarians, representatives of youth wings of political parties and leaders of the PA met online 27 May to discuss how to ensure a better presence of youth representatives in multilateral organizations. The event was organized by the OSCE PA as part of its Call for Action – Helsinki +50 Process and was moderated by OSCE PA High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier.

In his opening remarks, OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) said that despite age differences, all participants were united in beliefs in the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, such as the rule of law, environmental protection, security

and human rights. OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella also spoke at the opening, emphasizing his view that there are two central issues at stake: empowering youth and realizing youth visions. We need the first to achieve the second, Montella said, offering assurances that the PA is committed to achieving this end.

The discussion focused on how to set priorities for the agenda of the OSCE with the role of youth centered in its work. It was noted that young people need more inclusive representation, including a place at the table in decision-making processes.

PA participates in regional seminar on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

The OSCE PA was represented at an online seminar on 27-28 May on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security by Chief Diplomatic Advisor Miodrag Pančeski who delivered a keynote address on "Democratic oversight and the role of parliaments." While underlining the Assembly's work in promoting exchanges on the implementation of the Code, Amb. Pančeski emphasized the OSCE PA's role in institutionalizing discussions, reminding participants of its unique characteristic, serving as a critical nexus between the OSCE and participating States. "We need

both experts and parliamentarians to commit to fostering its full implementation across all its aspects," he said.

The seminar provided an opportunity to senior representatives of the participating States, academia and civil society, as well as the OSCE executive structures and international organizations, to address the role of parliaments in the democratic control of security forces; women, peace and security; national practices in implementing the Code of Conduct; and the role of youth with a focus on regional security challenges.

Ukrainian Delegation leadership meets with OSCE Secretary General Schmid in Kyiv

OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid met on 30 May with Ukraine's Head of Delegation to the PA Mykyta Poturayev and Deputy Heads Artur Gerasymov and Grygoriy Nemyria. Discussions focused on support for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and the impact of the partial closure of crossing points. The meeting was part of Schmid's five-day official visit to Ukraine in which she met with a range of political actors.



Left to right: Artur Gerasymov, Mykyta Poturayev, Helga Schmid and Grygoriy Nemyria