

Afghanistan and Mediterranean in focus at OSCE PA Autumn Meeting



Margareta Cederfelt, presiding over the Autumn Meeting from OSCE PA headquarters in Copenhagen, 4 November

Featuring a Mediterranean Forum and a Parliamentary Conference on the theme “Current Security Challenges: Focus on Afghanistan,” the OSCE PA’s 19th Autumn Meeting took place in an online format on 3-4 November. More than 30 parliamentarians from across the OSCE area took part in the Afghanistan debate on 4 November.

Introducing the debate, OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) noted that what happens in Afghanistan has major implications for neighbouring countries, as well as for international security more broadly. She noted that given the Taliban’s history, there are serious concerns that the hard-won rights of women and girls will be revoked. Amb. Tuula Yrjölä, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), said that the OSCE should support participating States in mitigating the impacts of the evolving situation.

The chairs of the OSCE PA’s three general committees spoke about the ripple effects on the security of the OSCE

region, which will likely be felt for years to come. In the debate, parliamentarians expressed concerns about the return of an international terrorist threat, the humanitarian situation and economic crisis. There is a palpable need for working on issues such as human rights and ensuring humanitarian access in co-operation with neighboring countries of Afghanistan, it was stressed.

Earlier in the day, the PA’s Mediterranean Forum met and heard from delegates representing a number of OSCE Mediterranean Partners as well as Adam Halacinski, the Chairperson of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation Group. Amb. Halacinski briefed the Assembly on OSCE initiatives with Mediterranean Partners and discussed ways to improve the OSCE as platform for debate on how to overcome current challenges in the region.

The OSCE PA’s Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs and Vice-President Pascal Allizard (France) noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated tensions and crises in the region. The pandemic, Allizard said, has highlighted the need for collective responses, both at the governmental and parliamentary level.

Climate change was stressed as also a global priority, as it is exacerbating drought and flooding, and leading to increased migration flows. Parliamentarians raised concerns about the development gap between north and south, with migration highlighted as a challenge for Europe as a whole.

OSCE parliamentarians issue urgent plea to tackle climate emergency

In view of the COP26 taking place in Glasgow, the leaders of the OSCE PA’s economic and environmental committee, together with its envoys on Arctic issues and Sustainable Development Goals, have issued a “Parliamentary Plea for Resolute Climate Action.” The parliamentarians call for bold mitigation and adaptation actions to tackle the climate emergency through increased international security co-operation. Read the statement here: <https://bit.ly/3n3KEwI>

OSCE PA high-level visit to Turkey underway this week

An OSCE PA delegation is visiting Turkey this week for high-level meetings. PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) and Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) have met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly Mustafa Şentop, Members of the Turkish Delegation to the OSCE PA led by Selami Altinok, and representatives of various political parties, as well as representatives of the UNHCR and Ministries of Justice, Interior and Foreign Affairs. Discussions have focused on Turkey’s contributions to the OSCE PA and the challenges posed by hosting more than 3.6 million Syrian



refugees, as well as countering terrorism and other issues.

The visit continues through Thursday in Istanbul, where the delegation will meet representatives of civil society and the International Secretariat of PABSEC.

Featured tweets @oscepa

The Chair of the OSCE PA’s Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, Vice-President Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria), tweeted on Monday about developments on the border of Poland and Belarus. “Deeply concerned about escalating situation at Belarus-Poland border,” Vigenin wrote. “As Chair of the @oscepa Migration committee, I urge all parties to reach a peaceful solution in full respect of international commitments and to ensure the safety and access to humanitarian aid of all migrants.”



Kristian Vigenin
@vigenin

Deeply concerned about escalating situation at Belarus-Poland border. As Chair of the #oscepa Migration committee, I urge all parties to reach a peaceful solution in full respect of international commitments and to ensure the safety and access to humanitarian aid of all migrants.