

## In Kazakhstan, President Cederfelt holds high-level meetings and addresses events



OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) is on an official visit to Kazakhstan this week, where she has met with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Vassilenko, civil society representatives and members of the international community. The meeting with President Tokayev underlined the importance of strengthening co-operation between Kazakhstan and the OSCE PA, with President Cederfelt noting that the Assembly is following closely the situation in the country and is particularly interested in Kazakhstan's political reforms.

President Cederfelt acknowledged the multiple geopolitical challenges Kazakhstan is facing, emphasized the need to continue working on the media law in line with the international commitments, and stressed the crucial work the OSCE is doing in the region. Parties agreed on the vital role of the OSCE including its Parliamentary Assembly, where current President Tokayev served as a Vice-President in 2008. Kazakhstan also hosted the PA's Annual Session that year.

Meeting with civil society representatives, President Cederfelt has discussed gender equality in Kazakhstan and other issues.

On Wednesday, she met with Kestutis Jankauskas, the EU's Ambassador to Kazakhstan, to exchange views on regional developments, and with UN Resident Coordinator Michaela Friberg-Storey, for discussions on sustainable development. Of particular interest to President Cederfelt is developing engagement with Central Asia in light of recent political developments.

She also addressed the first plenary of Global Businesswomen Council as part of the 35th plenary session of the Foreign Investors Council, where she emphasized the need for more women in peace-building, and spoke at the OSCE Regional Meeting of Heads of Field Operations in Central Asia, where she highlighted the key contribution of the field offices and shared ideas for further co-operation with the missions and OSCE institutions, including in the area of election observation.

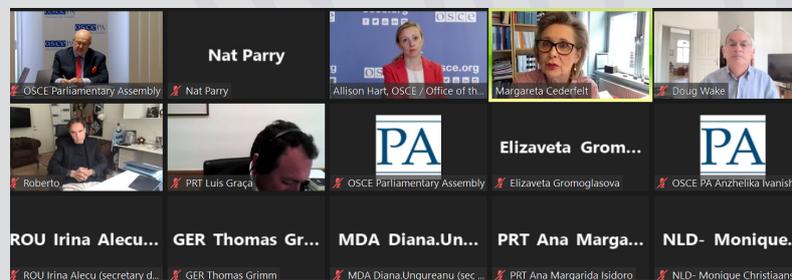
On Tuesday, Cederfelt visited the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, led by Ambassador Volker Frobarth, where she received an update on the Office's activities. Her visit continues the rest of the week with participation at the Astana International Forum and a number of scheduled bilateral meetings.

## OSCE PA webinar focuses on strengthening the OSCE ahead of its 50th anniversary

The OSCE PA held a discussion on challenges facing the OSCE on 31 May, including the participation of OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt; Secretary General Roberto Montella; Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Matteo Mecacci; Allison Hart, Senior Advisor/Chief of Staff to the OSCE Secretary General; and Doug Wake, former US diplomat and senior OSCE official. The meeting was moderated by Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, OSCE PA High-Level Expert.

The meeting, held in the framework of the OSCE PA's Call for Action – Helsinki +50 initiative, included several PA Members who agreed that parliamentarians can play an important role in raising awareness of the OSCE's challenges within their parliaments and urging governments to engage with a view to their timely and effective resolution. The urgency of raising awareness about the OSCE was stressed, as well as the need for governments to focus on these questions and take responsibility.

The OSCE's many strengths were also highlighted, including its cost-efficient manner of operating and the impact that it has on the ground. There is a need, however, for more flexibility in order



to continue important programmes that have a real impact, such as election observation. The organization also has enduring value as a platform for dialogue, which might be more useful in the future, it was pointed out, considering today's geopolitical realities.

In the discussion, participants said that the situation facing the OSCE should be a wake-up call, and emphasized that the OSCE must receive the funding it needs to continue to work towards peace and security. Governments should hear from elected officials about these issues, it was underlined, and in this regard parliaments can have a real impact.

## Bureau and Special Representative on Civil Society hold meetings ahead of Annual Session



The OSCE PA's Bureau met on 1 June to discuss procedural matters ahead of the 30th Annual Session, including a proposed business audit of the administrative functions of the OSCE

PA. The meeting, which was chaired by President Margareta Cederfelt alongside Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen and Secretary General Roberto Montella, was a hybrid meeting with several Bureau members attending remotely.

On 5 June, OSCE PA Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement Kyriakos Hadjiyianni convened a meeting with several Canadian civil society groups, with discussion focused primarily on the war in Ukraine. Other topics of discussion included nuclear arms proliferation and indigenous people's rights in Canada.