

In Rome, OSCE parliamentarians discuss crime and drugs, received by Pope Leo XIV



President of the Chamber of Deputies Lorenzo Fontana addresses the conference, Rome, 14 May 2026



The OSCEPA delegation presents the Pope with a copy of the Helsinki Final Act, Vatican City, 15 May 2026

The second Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Fight Against Organized Crime in the OSCE Region opened on 14 May at the Chamber of Deputies in Rome, hosted by the Italian Parliament at the initiative of OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime, Eugenio Zoffili (Italy). The two-day event gathered over 150 parliamentarians and experts from more than 40 OSCE participating States under the theme “#STOPDRUGS – Fighting Drug Trafficking together to Defend Security, Health and the Rule of Law.”

The opening session featured high-level remarks from President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies Lorenzo Fontana, OSCE PA Vice-President Eugenio Zoffili, OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons (Spain), Undersecretary of State at the Italian Ministry of the Interior Nicola Molteni, and OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella.

Dedicated sessions addressed the pressing security and public health emergency posed by the rapid spread of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, as well as the human dimension of the crisis – with a focus on recovery, prevention, and the vital role of therapeutic communities in rebuilding lives affected by addiction. Senior representatives from governments, NGOs and international organizations shared insights, with discussions examining Italy’s pre-emptive National Plan for preventing synthetic opioid misuse as a potential model for integrated interagency governance.

Speakers advocated for person-centered policies that shift from reactive emergency measures toward prevention, anti-

patation, and sustained support. They addressed growing mental health challenges and loneliness among young people, calling for integrated care systems that combine early intervention, education, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. The importance of empowering families, schools, and local communities as active partners in prevention and recovery was repeatedly underlined.

Ahead of the conference, President Pons held a bilateral meeting with Speaker Fontana. The two leaders reaffirmed the value of inter-parliamentary diplomacy in tackling shared security challenges and praised Italy’s recognized international role in combating organized crime. They also exchanged views on the ongoing war in Ukraine and its broader implications for the OSCE region.

On 15 May, conference participants were received by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican in the Clementine Hall – the first such meeting between a large OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation and the Pope.

In his address, Pope Leo XIV emphasized that combating organized crime and drug trafficking demands robust international co-operation grounded in the rule of law, the protection of human dignity, and effective prevention. He called for comprehensive strategies integrating law enforcement, criminal justice, rehabilitation, and social reintegration.

President Pons and Vice-President thanked the Pope for his message of support, and presented him with a copy of the Helsinki Final Act, the foundational document of the OSCE process symbolizing dialogue, co-operation, and peace.

Video of Rome conference, Annual Session reports and resolutions available online

Videos of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Fight Against Organized Crime in the OSCE Region are available here: <https://bit.ly/4dS2QTN> Additional reports and draft resolutions of the three general committees have been posted at the Annual Session’s website here: <https://bit.ly/4uB1JO2>

Special Rep Argynbekova highlights parliamentary dimension at UNFPA meeting

In a meeting with the Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Diene Keita, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Special Representative on Climate Change, Ainur Argynbekova (Kazakhstan), highlighted the significance of the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE in combating climate change. Stressing the importance of strengthening security and international co-operation in this regard, she noted in particular the special role of women in promoting sustainable development.

Taking place 12 May in Astana, the meeting was held on the topic “Transformational Change for People, Planet, Prosperity,



Ainur Argynbekova with participants of the Astana event, 12 May 2026

Peace and Partnership,” and brought together women leaders holding senior positions in government, parliament, the diplomatic corps, business, and the United Nations system.

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