

Report of the Special Rapporteur on Digital Agenda

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Mandate

On 25 September 2019, OSCE PA President George Tsereteli appointed me as Special Rapporteur on Digital Agenda with the following mandate:

- Raise awareness within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly regarding the benefits and the security implications of the digitalization process;
- Promote within the OSCE area an inclusive digital society which benefits from all research, technology and innovation initiatives that enable future technologies, software, networks and services, including in the areas of transport and urban mobility;
- Facilitate co-operation and discussions among OSCE PA delegations on how to increase information exchange and awareness in the field of cybersecurity in OSCE participating states;
- Monitor the developments on digital transformation in the OSCE region;
- Communicate with relevant actors within the OSCE and work in close co- operation with the OSCE PA Second Committee.

The emerging and fast-evolving implications of digital transformation are not only leading to progress and prosperity, but also to the emergence of new or enhanced security threats and challenges. Digitalization needs to be at the top of our agenda and I would like to thank the President for giving me the mandate to report on such critical issue.

Recent activities

I have structured my activities along two directions. First, with the aim to enhance closer co-ordination with the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions, I have met in Vienna with Ambassador Vuk Zugic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and the OSCE Gender Section, to identify avenues for future co-operation and on the implementation of the resolution on “Digitalization as an advantage for gender policies,” adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly at the Luxembourg Annual Session in July 2019.

As part of my visit to Vienna on November 2019, I participated to the OSCE Security Days on “A Human Rights-Centred Approach to Technology and Security”. As panelist at the session on “Technology for Security,” I have underlined the crucial role of members of parliament to encourage and propose legislation that supports participating states in addressing the risks produced by digitalization. On that occasion, I also had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with representatives from international Institutions, diplomacy, academia, civil society and media on how participating States can implement a gender-sensitive and human rights-centred approach to addressing this topic.

Secondly, I started exploring and studying participating States’ digital strategies and action plans by conducting an official visit to Denmark in January 2020. I held meetings with Christoffer Aagaard Melson, Venstre party’s spokesperson on IT and telecommunications in the Danish Parliament, as well as with officials from the Danish Agency for Digitisation, the Confederation of Danish Industry, Copenhagen City Hall administration and at the Danish Parliament. A wide range of topics were discussed during these meetings, including Denmark’s digital solutions and services for the citizens, digitalization of the public sector, legal frameworks, data sharing, interaction between public and private sectors. Exchanges also touched upon cyber-security, data protection and the need to safeguard the widespread confidence and trust in the public sector, which was vital for Denmark’s digital developments.

Future activities

Until the Annual Session in Vancouver in July 2020, I intend to further strengthen co-operation with the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions, by holding other meetings in Vienna, and to pay official visits to participating States that have only marginally benefitted from the opportunities offered by digitalization.

For a more comprehensive and complete report that I will present at the upcoming Annual Session, I plan to circulate in the coming week a questionnaire to OSCE PA delegations to gather information about relevant national legal frameworks and policies.