

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 2020 Annual Session is cancelled due to coronavirus



In a joint letter sent to OSCE PA members Wednesday, Assembly President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Head of the Canadian Delegation Hedy Fry announced that the 29th Annual Session has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Annual Session was scheduled to take place in Vancouver, Canada, on 3-7 July, under the theme "Bridging Divides and

Building Human Security from Vancouver to Vladivostok."

"This joint decision has been taken after careful consideration, due to the current pandemic caused by COVID-19, by taking into account the health and safety of all participants and in view of the uncertainty and expected restrictions for travel and the holding of large events in the upcoming months, which would not allow for a regular organization and proceeding of the Annual Session," Fry and Tsereteli wrote.

In last week's online Bureau meeting, members discussed modalities for the possible cancellation of the Annual Session and provisions that may be found in the Rules of Procedure. Peter Bowness, Chair of the Rules Sub-Committee, noted that while the rules do not provide specific stipulations on emergency situations, it is clear that force majeure would allow for alternative settings and arrangements to be made.

The Bureau at its next meeting to be held via video conference on 27 April will discuss, consider and decide on the necessary measures pertaining to the cancellation of the Annual Session. Fry and Tsereteli stressed that the efficient operations of the Assembly will be ensured in close connection with the OSCE PA Secretary General and the International Secretariat.

Op-eds published by PA leaders

Leaders of the OSCE PA have published op-eds on the importance of ensuring the continuation of parliamentary activity during the coronavirus pandemic and ensuring that states of emergencies comply with international obligations. Read the op-eds by President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Vice-President Kari Henriksen (Norway) at www.oscepa.org.

Co-ordination video call between Secretaries General of OSCE PA, NATO PA and PACE

In a video conference call on 27 March with his counterparts at NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella discussed common challenges facing the three organizations during the COVID-19 crisis. PACE Secretary General Wojciech Sawicki and NATO PA Secretary General Ruxandra Popa shared with Montella their views and strategies for holding statutory meetings going forward.

The three SGs discussed possibilities for video-conferencing, electronic voting and simultaneous translation. There was general agreement that technology offers innovative solutions for coping with social distancing requirements but that it is important to maintain a high level of usability and quality for members



Roberto Montella meets counterparts online, 27 March 2020.

of the assemblies, and ensuring that decisions are taken in line with the rules. The SGs expressed support for further co-operation and strengthened multilateralism in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Featured tweets @oscepa

OSCE PA Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan) last week tweeted out a video in which he discussed the implementation of the COVID-19 quarantine in Azerbaijan, using the hashtag #WeAreOSCEPA. Guliyev highlighted the "Stay Home - Save the Society" public awareness campaign in his country.

Last week, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella launched a challenge for OSCE parliamentarians to post brief videos with messages of support to their constituents, governments and people of the OSCE area. Members can post the video on their favorite social media platform using the hashtag #WeAreOSCEPA and tagging @oscepa so that the PA can share the videos on its networks as well.



Azay Guliyev
@AzayGuliyev

I made an address on #coronavirus through REAL TV with which we launched the joint "Stay Home - Save the Society" public awareness campaign monitoring #COVID19 quarantine regime's state of implementation in #Azerbaijan.
#WeAreOSCEPA



"Evdə qal, cəmiyyəti qor". Real TV - 27.03.2020
youtube.com