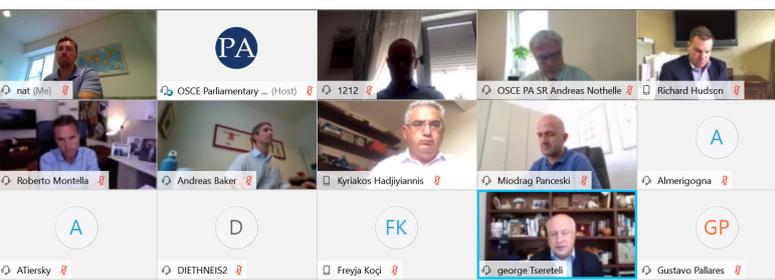


## PA leaders explore avenues for engagement on Belarusian political crisis



Several OSCE PA leaders joined an online meeting on 20 August to discuss the situation in Belarus and possible avenues for engagement for the OSCE PA. President George Tsereteli (Georgia) and Secretary General Roberto Montella were joined by the Chair of the OSCE PA's First Committee, Richard Hudson (United States), as well as the Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Third Committee – Kyriakos Hadjiyiannis (Cyprus), Michael Link (Germany), and Kari Henriksen (Norway), respectively. Also participating in the meeting was Ditmir Bushati (Albania), who served as Head of the OSCE PA's election observation mission to Belarus in 2019.

Topics of discussion included short- and long-term strategies

for contributing to a democratic and stable Belarus, how to ensure support for human rights and principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and possible options going forward to ensure fair results. Members discussed the role being played by the OSCE's governmental side and how the PA could contribute to these initiatives. It was noted that many OSCE parliamentarians, including Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement Pia Kauma (Finland), have expressed interest in increasing the PA's involvement.

The meeting was briefly joined by Valery Voronetsky, a member of the Belarusian Delegation to the OSCE PA, who offered a perspective on the current situation on the ground and noted that Belarus is interested in constructive engagement with the international community.

In the week since the meeting, President Tsereteli has reached out to relevant actors in Minsk, noting his support for the offer formulated by the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship to visit Belarus to advance an open and constructive dialogue between all stakeholders. Tsereteli has stressed that he and other members of the OSCE PA are ready to join efforts to promote dialogue with parliamentary and governmental representatives in Belarus, opposition figures, civil society organizations, and independent media.

## SG Montella meets with counterparts from NATO PA and PACE

The Secretaries General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly met online Monday to compare notes and discuss plans. Topics of discussion included the situation in Belarus and the OSCE PA's upcoming election observation in Montenegro.

## Tsereteli addresses youth issues at the Samarkand Human Rights Web Forum

Speaking at the opening session of the Samarkand Human Rights Web Forum on 12 August, OSCE PA President George Tsereteli said that youth, as well as women and minorities, must be actively included in decision-making mechanisms. He stressed that young people's interests need to be addressed comprehensively in order to effectively tackle challenges such as armed conflicts, climate change, widespread poverty and inequality.

"The economic and social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic have disrupted nearly all aspects of life for all segments of society," Tsereteli said. "In a very short period of time, this crisis has demonstrated a potential to exacerbate inequalities between generations and to alienate the youngest segment of our populations. We must remain vigilant about this."

The forum, held under the theme "Youth 2020: Global Soli-



George Tsereteli addresses Samarkand Human Rights Forum, 12 Aug.

arity, Sustainable Development and Human Rights," was part of the UN75 initiative and served as a follow-up to the Asian Human Rights Forum held in Samarkand on 22-23 November 2018, which was attended by Tsereteli.

## Cederfelt and Wicker speak at Chatham House event on Boris Nemtsov assassination

OSCE PA Vice-Presidents Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and Roger Wicker (United States) participated in an online forum held by Chatham House on 28 July on the 2015 assassination of Russian opposition figure Boris Nemtsov.

Cederfelt, who serves as OSCE PA Special Rapporteur on the Nemtsov case, presented an updated version of her report, which was initially published last February. Cederfelt highlighted a lack of transparency in the legal process surrounding the case and urged a greater commitment to the rule of law in Russia.

In his remarks, Wicker noted that Russia's international obligations require increased transparency. Crimes against opposition figures create a climate of fear, he said, noting several steps that the US government has taken to promote accountability for Nemtsov's murder.



Margareta Cederfelt addresses Chatham House event, 28 July