

PA participates in OSCE Swedish Chairpersonship Opening, Regional Working Groups



OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella addressed the opening of the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship on 14 January, held in a virtual format. In his remarks, Montella expressed the full support of the PA in implementing CiO Ann Linde's priorities in 2021 including strengthening multilateralism and advancing conflict resolution efforts in the OSCE region. The Secretary General also stated that he looks forward to working with the newly appointed Heads of Institutions.

OSCE PA staff actively engaged with Regional Working Group sessions on 15 January. Farimah Daftary and Manuchekhr Salokhudinov participated in the Central Asia working group, with Daftary briefly outlining the PA's work in the region including the appointment of a new OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia, Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), and recent election observation in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. She

also stressed the importance of keeping dialogue open with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Advisor Loic Poulain reported to the Eastern Europe WG that a new PA Special Representative has been appointed to focus on the region, German parliamentarian Daniela De Ridder. Poulain discussed a meeting organized by the PA with Bureau members, Belarusian Head of Delegation Andrei Savinykh, and opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in September, intended to promote dialogue in Belarus.

Advisor Francesco Pagani submitted a written presentation to the South East Europe working group in which he shared information about the PA's election observation mission in Montenegro last August, the preparation for the important upcoming Albanian elections, and other work in the region. During the WG on the South Caucasus, advisor Tim Knoblaue informed participants about the past work of the PA in the region, as well as about the appointment of SR Bushati and his plans to work with Delegations and OSCE bodies in the upcoming year.

OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna Andreas Notherle, addressed today's opening of the US Chairpersonship of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, stressing that OSCE parliamentarians support the FSC as a body that provides an opportunity to discuss vital issues regarding comprehensive security.

President Bowness to address Permanent Council, PA launches Medium page

President Peter Lord Bowness will address the OSCE Permanent Council on 21 January, in his first appearance at the body since taking over as PA President in December. The PA today launched a page at the website Medium.com with an op-ed by the leaders of the recent US election observation mission. Please visit: <https://osce-pa.medium.com/>

Special Representatives discuss developments in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Mongolia

On 12 and 13 January, the recently appointed OSCE PA Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ditmir Bushati (Albania), met bilaterally with the members of the Delegations of Armenia and Azerbaijan. In the online meetings, he introduced himself to the members and discussed with them the developments in their respective countries, as well as the role of the OSCE and the OSCE PA in supporting the ongoing efforts of both countries in the aftermath of the 2020 war and in the fulfilment of OSCE commitments.

Both delegations briefed Bushati on the developments since the conclusion of the 10 November ceasefire agreement and shared information on the ongoing efforts of both countries in addressing economic and humanitarian issues.

Furthermore, Special Representative Bushati discussed with both Delegations the way forward in terms of confidence-building measures, in particular through parliamentary dialogue.

On 13 January OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia Reinhold Lopatka (Austria) met with the Mongolian Ambassador to the OSCE in Vienna Ms. Battungalag Gankhuurai, during which he discussed his new role as Special Representative and Mongolia's engagement with the PA. On 15 January Lopatka met with the Conflict Prevention Centre's Central Asia desk to discuss his upcoming plans and priorities. The meeting was briefly joined by CPC Director Tuula Yrjola.

CCT member addresses UN/IPU panel on protecting rights of terrorism victims

Spanish parliamentarian Teresa Jiménez Becerril Barrio, a member of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, spoke Tuesday as a panelist at the 5th Virtual Thematic Expert Consultations for the development of Model Legislative Provisions to Support and Protect the Rights and Needs of Victims of Terrorism, organized by the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Addressing the first panel on the "Role of Civil Society Organisations in fulfilling, promoting and protecting the rights and needs of victims of terrorism," Jimenez reiterated the

vitality of victims' associations in sensitizing all societal actors to the needs of those affected by terrorist attacks, and their important role in shaping the wide range of national policies and processes in this regard.

She recalled OSCE PA efforts, such as 2018 "Madrid Conference on Victims of Terrorism," hosted by the Senate of Spain in co-operation with the OSCE PA, as well as the CCT's 2020 visit to Norway. She also mentioned the PA's determination to further work on this topic and to urge OSCE participating States, through its means, to take concrete steps to protect, assist and support victims of terrorism.