

Helsinki 50th anniversary 2025 - PA's roundtable reaffirms OSCE's common purpose



The OSCE PA held an online roundtable last week under the theme, "Toward Helsinki +50: Reaffirming a Common Purpose," which followed up on the "OSCE Call for Action" with a view towards preparing for the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025.

With more than 130 participants, including former OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Presidents, OSCE Chairs, Secretaries General, current and former leaders of OSCE institutions, as well as members of OSCE PA Delegations, the event on 27 January featured keynote addresses from former OSCE/ODIHR Director Christian Strohal and Douglas Wake, Senior Expert at the OSCE Office of the Secretary General.

Opening the event, OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness (United Kingdom) identified one of the key challenges facing the OSCE as its lack of recognition at the highest levels of government, noting that parliamentarians have some distinct assets that could help in this regard. PA Secretary General Roberto Montella said that the PA's Helsinki +50 initiative, led and supported by the OSCE PA Bureau and co-ordinated by High-Level Expert

Lamberto Zannier, is helping to pull together people and ideas to strengthen the Organization as the 50th anniversary approaches.

Ambassador Zannier discussed how parliaments can help push initiatives to make the Organization more effective and more visible, with a focus on investing in multilateralism in a way that keeps everyone on board.

Strohal expressed satisfaction that the OSCE Call for Action has developed into a broader process, stressing that to work through disagreements a common understanding is needed of the Organization's purpose. He underlined the importance of shared responsibility and the need to strengthen mechanisms for implementation of commitments and follow-up. Wake noted that making the OSCE more well-known has been a long-time goal but noted that communications strategies are not effective unless there is a good story to tell. Therefore it is important to focus on the bigger picture and to highlight success stories, he said, which is something that parliamentarians can contribute to by using their platforms to speak about the OSCE to national audiences.

Ilkka Kanerva (Finland), who has served as both OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and OSCE PA President, emphasized that the added value of the PA is parliamentary diplomacy. "We must get deeper into the actual security challenges in our region so that real concrete results can be achieved," Kanerva said.

In the discussion, participants highlighted ongoing challenges facing the OSCE and the ways forward. The PA plays a critical role, it was noted, in empowering parliamentarians to advocate on behalf of OSCE commitments and values. They also highlighted the need to promote the OSCE's field work and to focus on what makes the OSCE unique, and for parliamentarians to engage in dialogue on OSCE issues.

Advisor Daria Boyarskaya joins the PA's Vienna Liaison Office

Daria Boyarskaya, from the Russian Federation, joined the OSCE PA staff this week as Advisor in the Vienna Liaison Office. She previously worked as Counsellor at the North America Desk of the Russian Foreign Ministry, and has more than ten years of experience in the diplomatic service as a professional translator and interpreter at the highest level of the Russian Government.

Special Representative Bushati meets with Georgian Delegation to the PA

The OSCE PA's Special Representative on the South Caucasus, Albanian parliamentarian Ditmir Bushati, met on Monday with the newly appointed Georgian Delegation to the OSCE PA to introduce himself and discuss ongoing developments in Georgia and the broader region. In the discussion with Head of Delegation Nikoloz Samkharadze, and members Maka Botchorishvili and Kakha Kuchava, the sides exchanged views on OSCE PA engagement in Georgia, as well as the priorities of the new Georgian Delegation within the OSCE PA for 2021, including the potential for wider parliamentary dialogue between parliamentarians within the region.



OSCE PA Secretary General Montella meets with Svetlana Tikhonovskaya

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella met on Monday with former Belarusian presidential candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and her political advisor Franak Viacorka. Participants exchanged views about the current political crisis in Belarus and discussed possible avenues for its resolution. Tsikhanouskaya expressed appreciation for OSCE PA attention to Belarus pointing to public statements made by Assembly leaders on violations of human rights, the safety of journalists, freedom of the media and right to peaceful assembly.

The Secretary General informed Tsikhanouskaya about the recent appointment of Special Representative on Eastern Europe Daniela De Ridder (Germany) who, among other areas, is mandated to cover issues related to the situation in Belarus. Dr De Ridder intends to have a series of meetings with various stakeholders and interlocutors in Belarus, including the OSCE PA Belarus Delegation, authorities and civil society. Participants agreed that a separate meeting between Special Representative De Ridder and Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya will be arranged.