

## Remote Session concludes with election of President and Officers



Members of the Bureau and staff of the International Secretariat in Vienna, 6 July 2021

**B**ringing together hundreds of OSCE parliamentarians in a hybrid format for debates and votes, the OSCE PA's 2021 Remote Session concluded Tuesday with the announcement of election results. Former PA Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) was elected Assembly President, and new Vice-Presidents were elected including Pia Kauma (Finland), Daniela de Ridder (Germany), Askar Shakirov (Kazakhstan), Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), and Irene Charalambides (Cyprus). Also newly elected were Pere Joan Pons (Spain) and Gudrun Kugler (Austria) to serve as Chair and Rapporteur of the Second Committee, and Sereine Mauborgne (France) and Johan Buser (Sweden) to serve as Chair and Rapporteur of the Third Committee.

The results were announced at the closing plenary, which also featured speeches by outgoing OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness and Swedish Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde. OSCE PA members adopted three items of urgency dealing with matters related to Belarus, Ukraine, and rising hate and intolerance in the OSCE region.

Upon winning the election, Cederfelt pledged that she would work as President for principles of accountability, inclusion, and respect for every country. She highlighted human rights, democracy, and climate change as some of her top priorities.

The plenary also included reports by leaders of recent election observation missions, as well as Chairs of OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committees and Special Representatives. Members heard about the PA's work on migration, counter-terrorism, Arctic issues, climate change, gender issues,

human trafficking, and more.

On Monday, the OSCE PA's Standing Committee met and heard reports by the PA's President, Treasurer, and Secretary General. The Assembly adopted the budget proposed by Treasurer Peter-Juel Jensen without objection. The Standing Committee meeting, like the plenary, was held in hybrid format, with some members participating in Vienna, and others joining via Zoom.

Last week, the PA's three general committees met online to discuss reports offered by committee rapporteurs dealing with issues such as the social and economic repercussions of the pandemic, sustainable migration management, post-COVID multilateral diplomacy, protracted conflicts in the OSCE area, the impact of the pandemic on transnational threats, and access to health care.

Presenting his report to the First Committee, Rapporteur Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania) reminded colleagues that COVID-19 will not be the only unexpected challenge that the international community faces in the years to come. Therefore, he stressed that it is necessary to ensure that principles are upheld with actions. In the Second Committee, former Rapporteur Elona Gjebrea Hoxha (Albania) highlighted how COVID-19 has upended lives for billions of people, underlining the need for co-ordinated efforts in addressing a multitude of complex related issues.

The Third Committee featured debate on the report put forward by outgoing Rapporteur Kari Henriksen (Norway), with parliamentarians stressing that as the world's largest security organization, the OSCE can and must play a key role in a renewed focus on human-centered conflict resolution in a post-COVID era.

### OSCE PA to observe Bulgarian and Moldovan elections

OSCE PA observers are deploying to Bulgaria and Moldova for elections this weekend. For the Bulgaria EOM, Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) will serve as Special Co-ordinator and Elona Gjebrea Hoxha (Albania) will head the OSCE PA's team. In Moldova, Ditmir Bushati (Albania) will serve as Special Co-ordinator and Pia Kauma (Finland) will head the PA's election observation mission.

### Meeting with Austrian parliamentarians focuses on raising OSCE profile

**T**he OSCE PA hosted an event on Wednesday to discuss ways to raise the profile and visibility of the Organization in Austria. Chaired by OSCE PA High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier, the event featured the participation of several members of the Austrian Delegation to the OSCE PA – including Gudrun Kugler, Reinhold Lopatka, and Helmut Brandstätter – and was part of the OSCE PA's ongoing efforts to generate political impetus and raise public awareness of the OSCE. Participants offered ideas on ways to generate political



thrust within OSCE participating States, especially by leveraging the assets of parliamentarians who can both speak about the OSCE to constituents and relay concerns of the people to the OSCE.