

PA President and Secretary General meet with Chairperson-in-Office in Stockholm



L-R: Roberto Montella, Margareta Cederfelt, Kent Harstedt and Ann Linde

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) and Secretary General Roberto Montella met Wednesday in Stockholm with Swedish Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde and the Special Envoy of the CiO, Ambassador Kent Härstedt. Discussions focused on ways that the PA can contribute to enhancing the OSCE's overall efficiency and effectiveness, includ-

ing by helping to overcome obstacles that prevent timely decisions being adopted. Cederfelt, Montella, Linde and Härstedt also focused on challenges to the OSCE's work in the human dimension and in particular election observation. These difficulties need to be addressed with long-term solutions in order to ensure a viable and effective organization that is able to meet the many challenges in the OSCE area, the participants said.

The sides also discussed developments in Belarus and what can be done to support democracy in that country, as well as OSCE conflict resolution, and how Special Representatives from the PA and the CiO can work together to advance these efforts.

While in Stockholm, Secretary General Montella also discussed with President Cederfelt several priorities of the OSCE PA, including upcoming Assembly and presidential activities.

OSCE PA President Cederfelt outlines her priorities in an op-ed

President Cederfelt published an op-ed last week at the OSCE PA's platform on Medium.com, outlining her priorities for the coming year and highlighting areas of focus since being elected in July. Pointing to security and political challenges, as well as environmental and human rights concerns, Cederfelt stressed the need to invest in the OSCE to build a better world. To read the full op-ed, please click here: <https://bit.ly/3JEJiXf>

PA's work on media freedom and countering disinformation highlighted at BSPC



PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) spoke Monday at the 30th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, which gathered parliamentarians online to discuss the theme "Sustainable democracy – how to face a changing world." Addressing the second session on changes in the media landscape, President Cederfelt emphasized the importance of protecting freedom of expression while combating disinformation and fake news. She welcomed the positive aspects of digitalization, noting that ease of access to information has empowered citizens, but stressed that

the move toward online platforms has also undermined traditional media as a pillar of a democratic society.

While recognizing that the polarized environment today provides fewer opportunities for in-depth analysis and that social media can serve as a fertile ground for conspiracy theories and disinformation, she pointed out that it is important to keep in mind that propaganda has been around for centuries. "I believe the key here is to bridge the gap between reliable information and plain propaganda," Cederfelt said. "This calls on us to take steps to better educate the wider public to become more media literate and resilient to disinformation."

She also highlighted the work of PA Special Representative on Disinformation and Propaganda Oscar Mina (San Marino), and stressed that the PA works in tandem with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Chairpersonship, and other OSCE structures to ensure the compliance of all participating States with their commitments to respect freedom of expression.

OSCE PA Finnish members discuss strengthening co-operation with OSCE SG

During a visit to Helsinki last week, OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid met with members of the PA's Finnish Delegation, including Head of Delegation Vilhelm Junnila and Vice-President Pia Kauma, who also serves as Special Representative on Central Asia. The discussion on 27 August focused on the value of strengthening co-operation between the PA and the OSCE's executive structures as a means of enhancing common security efforts. SG Schmid and the parliamentarians also discussed mutual efforts to enhance the visibility of the OSCE's work.



Helga Schmid (third from left) with members of the Finnish Delegation in Helsinki, 27 August