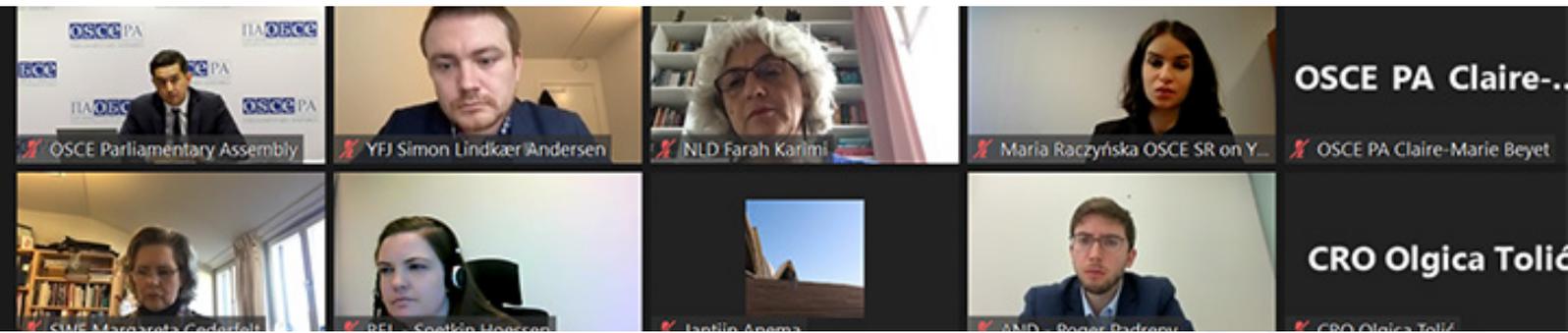


## Participants at OSCE PA webinar urge greater youth role in decision-making



The OSCE PA held a webinar on 18 February to explore ways of increasing young people's participation in decision-making processes. Entitled "Youth contribution to strengthening of rule of law, democracy and human rights in the OSCE area," the Parliamentary Web Dialogue highlighted various approaches to enhancing youth engagement, which, it was stressed, is essential to promote good public policy across the OSCE area.

In her opening remarks, OSCE PA Special Representative on Youth Engagement Farah Karimi (The Netherlands) said that the world cannot afford to ignore the contribution of younger generations if it hopes to solve global challenges. OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) argued that young people represent an important part of global society whose opinions and vision must be taken into consideration.

Keynote speakers included Maria Raczynska, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Youth and Security; Inka Hopsu, Member of the OSCE PA Delegation of

Finland; Ukrainian parliamentarian Alona Shkrum, and Simon Lindkaer of the European Youth Forum. Participants said that while listening to young people is important, what is ultimately needed is substantially improving youth participation.

Hopsu described the recently adopted Finnish National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security, describing in detail her country's policies to promote youth participation. Lindkaer discussed the Youth Progress Index, which he noted addresses the most pertinent questions about the wellbeing of younger generations. Engaging young people creates better policy and social progress, he said.

In the discussion, Roger Padreny (Andorra) encouraged young parliamentarians to get involved in the informal network that now exists within the OSCE PA to promote youth engagement. OSCE PA Members also talked about initiatives in their own countries to promote youth engagement. The importance of youth perspectives on peace and security was also emphasized.

## 2021 OSCE PA election observation brochure published

Despite disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic the OSCE PA was able to deploy nine observation missions (comprising some 456 OSCE PA observers) in seven participating States in 2021. Read more about the 2021 Election Observation Missions in the PA's newly published brochure, which includes summaries, statements, lists of participants and charts: <https://bit.ly/3h8uD4d>

## Meeting of OSCE PA Arctic Delegations prioritizes sustainable development

OSCE PA Delegations from all eight Arctic countries (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, United States) held an online meeting on 18 February to discuss policy priorities in the High North region and explore how to best address them, including within the Assembly's framework.

Held upon the initiative of Special Representative on Arctic Issues Bryndis Haraldsdottir (Iceland), the meeting focused attention on the severe challenges facing the region, including the impact of climate change on the life of Arctic indigenous communities and the natural environment. Participants reiterated the need for strong legislative action towards mitigation policies and resilience building, and emphasized that the Arctic must remain a region of co-operation rather than competition.

Special Representative Haraldsdottir underlined that environmental security is a top political priority. The threats facing societies in the Arctic are critical, she said, but can be turned into opportunities for co-operation. "We need to invest



in sustainable development," she said, "to save our planet and at the same time pursue the needed economic development."

Participants discussed the possibility of a resolution on Arctic issues to be presented at the upcoming Annual Session in Birmingham, United Kingdom, as well as other potential PA activities. PA Members reiterated in the meeting that the Arctic is and must remain an area of peace, security and co-operation, and that such model for co-operation should serve as a best practice also in the OSCE PA.