

Annual Session agreement signed, Pres. and SG attend Zelenskiy speech at House of Commons

OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) signed an official agreement with Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP and Lord John McFall of Alcluith, the Speakers of the House of Commons and House of Lords, respectively, to hold the OSCE PA's 29th Annual Session in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

The agreement formally establishes the venue for the meeting, which is the first in-person Annual Session of the Assembly since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to discussing practical aspects of the Annual Session, talks also focused on current political issues. Following the signing ceremony in London, President Cederfelt and Secretary General Roberto Montella sat in the public gallery of the House of Commons to watch an address to parliamentarians Tuesday evening by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who described in detail the dire situation his country faces due to the ongoing Russian invasion.



Cederfelt and Montella, together with Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallarés and Adviser to the President Loïc Poulain, also held meetings this week with the UK Delegation to the OSCE PA led by Head of Delegation John Whittingdale and Deputy Head Mark Pritchard. They also met Tuesday with the Chairs and Members of committees with a focus on international affairs and security, as well as Caroline Nokes, Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee.

OSCE PA South East Europe envoy and Vice-President Guliyev visits Bosnia and Herzegovina



OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on South East Europe, Azay Guliyev, is undertaking an official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina this week. The visit aims to take stock of domestic and regional developments while reiterating OSCE's commitment to continue to facilitate dialogue in all segments of society, in particular at the parliamentary level, in order to encourage reconciliation and rehabilitation in the Western Balkans, and to lend its contribution to the transforma-

tion and development of democratic institutions.

Today, he met with the Presidency, Željko Komšić, Milorad Dodik, Šefik Džaferović; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Biserka Turković; OSCE Head of Mission Amb. Kathleen Kavalec; Minister of Human Rights and Refugees Miloš Lučić; representatives of political parties representing the Inter-Agency Working Group on Election Law Reform; and members of the Joint Collegium of the Parliamentary Assembly of the House of Peoples and House of Representatives.

In his meeting with the Joint Collegium today, Guliyev stressed the need for convergence of political will to tackle challenges such as functioning institutions, election and other reforms, build confidence and retain a European perspective for BiH. More meetings are scheduled for the rest of the week.

ODIHR-OSCE PA visit to United States follows up on election observation



An OSCE delegation comprising two leaders of the international election observation mission to the United States in 2020 conducted a follow-up visit to Washington, DC, last week.

Michael Link, who served as Special Co-ordinator for the OSCE short-term observers for the 2020 elections in the United States, was in the US capital together with Urszula Gacek, who

headed the ODIHR observers, to discuss responses to recommendations stemming from the observation mission.

With a focus on recommendations from the ODIHR Final Report on the elections, the delegation met with senior officials including Senators Ben Cardin and Roger Wicker, and Representatives Steve Cohen and Joe Wilson from the Helsinki Commission, as well as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Douglas Jones, and others.

Interlocutors expressed their appreciation for the OSCE's work and took note of key recommendations from the mission. Acknowledging the decentralized system in the United States, Link and Gacek particularly highlighted the importance of international observers having access to all stages of the electoral process, including in polling stations.

PA holds webinar on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

The OSCE PA held a webinar on 2 March focused on implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Participants included OSCE PA Special Representative on SDGs Askar Shakirov and President Margareta Cederfelt, who noted that while international attention is rightly focused on the

Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, it is important not to lose sight of other matters on the global agenda. Challenges posed to development by the COVID-19 pandemic also require common solutions, it was stressed, and the OSCE PA should focus on increasing its impact in this regard.

SG Montella holds consultations with parliamentary partners

Today, OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella participated in a co-ordination call with the SGs of PACE and NATO PA, Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilisi and Ruxandra Popa, respectively, to exchange views and build co-operation to

more effectively respond to the situation in Ukraine. SG Montella has also scheduled a phone call with the SG of the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly in the coming days, underlining the importance of consultations with all parliamentary partners.