

President Kauma addresses OSCE Permanent Council, meets with ambassadors



Pia Kauma addresses the OSCE Permanent Council for the first time as Assembly President, 7 September 2023.

Addressing the OSCE Permanent Council last week, OSCE PA President Pia Kauma laid out her priorities for the coming year and highlighted outcomes of the Assembly's 30th Annual Session, held in Vancouver from 30 June to 4 July. President Kauma emphasized how Russia's ongoing war is primarily an attack on the people and sovereignty of Ukraine, but that it has also deeply impacted the OSCE as an organization.

The war in Ukraine, she said, constitutes a clear, gross and uncorrected violation of Helsinki principles. "Our Vancouver Declaration calls for continued political, financial, humanitarian and military support to Ukraine for its self-defence," she said. The OSCE PA, recognizing the need to be responsive to the needs of parliamentary colleagues in Kyiv, also decided in Vancouver

to establish a Parliamentary Support Team focused on Ukraine, Kauma noted.

The Vancouver Declaration, she pointed out, for the first time contains a fourth chapter focusing on the institutional crises facing the OSCE. "We took this unprecedented step because, as supporters of the OSCE, we are very concerned with the diminished capacity of the organization to deliver on its promise," the President said. "As our Vancouver Declaration states, 'the OSCE is facing an existential crisis, exacerbated by the politicized withholding of financial resources and a systematic misuse of the consensus rule.'"

Recent developments such as the blocking of the OSCE budget, failing to reach agreement on a Chair for next year, and limiting the role of the field operations will only diminish our common security, Kauma said, underlining that "we need you and your governments to heed this urgent message to maintain the OSCE fully operational." This is more important than ever, she stressed, with the Russian Federation's ongoing war against Ukraine poisoning diplomatic and political channels.

While in Vienna, President Kauma held a number of bilateral meetings with Permanent Council ambassadors and other OSCE officials. She assured her interlocutors of the PA's political support for bold approaches to advocate for improving the OSCE process.

John Aldag addresses international forum on fighting pollution in the Mediterranean

On Tuesday, John Aldag, a member of the Canadian Delegation to the OSCE PA, addressed the closing conference of the Clean Mediterranean Sea! Forum, speaking about the legal and political challenges of marine plastic pollution in the Mediterranean. Aldag, who sponsored a resolution on microplastic and nanoplastic pollution at the Vancouver Annual Session, described the OSCE PA's efforts on environmental protection, plastic pollution, including through the work of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology, and Environment. Especially since 2020, Aldag pointed out, the OSCE PA has been at forefront in promoting environmental protection and fighting pollution, advocating for the need to swiftly address the multifaceted impact of environmental degradation, pollution and loss of biodiversity on both the people and planet's health.

The OSCE PA's Vancouver Declaration, Aldag noted, reaffirms the OSCE PA commitments related to environmental protection and recognizes the presence and impacts of microplastics in marine and atmospheric environments. Stressing the need for

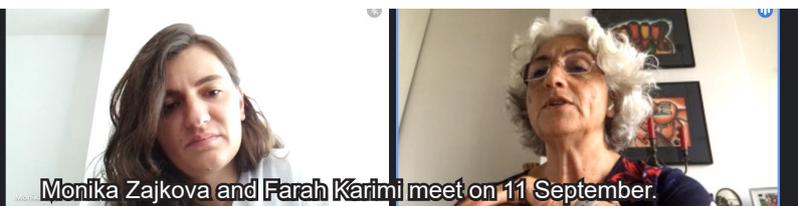


John Aldag addresses the CMSI forum on 12 September.

collaborative and transnational efforts to address this pollution due to its transboundary nature, the Vancouver Declaration urges OSCE participating States to bring to a successful conclusion the ongoing negotiations about the establishment of an international legally binding treaty to control and reduce plastic pollution.

Bringing together speakers from academia, politics, civil society and business to discuss the challenges of pollution in the Mediterranean, the Closing Conference of the Clean Mediterranean Sea! took place 10-12 September 2023 in Debeli Rtič, Slovenia.

Former and newly appointed Special Representatives discuss Youth, Peace and Security agenda



Monika Zajkova and Farah Karimi meet on 11 September.

On Monday, Farah Karimi (Netherlands), who served as the OSCE PA Special Representative on Youth Engagement from September 2021 until concluding her mandate in July 2023, conducted an online meeting with her successor in this role, Special Representative Monika Zajkova (North Macedonia). During the meeting, they discussed issues related to youth inclusion in decision-making processes within the OSCE region and the implementation of the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda.

The Special Representatives exchanged views on recent PA initiatives aimed at enhancing youth participation including a webinar on the implementation of UNSCR 2250 and the establishment of a parliamentary informal working group on Youth, Peace, and Security. Additionally, they discussed the further integration of the Network of Young Parliamentarians into the formal structures of the OSCE PA, and Karimi highlighted her activities to promote the role of youth. The meeting also touched upon the Assembly's engagement in safeguarding the rights of future generations, in line with the Resolution on Future Generations adopted during the Vancouver Annual Session.

Earlier that day, Karimi met with the OSCE PA International Secretariat staff to discuss her upcoming work and action plan in her new capacity as the OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia.