

Standing Committee of heads of PA delegations meets for discussions on OSCE matters



Meeting in an online format on 12 November, the OSCE PA's Standing Committee heard a keynote address by David Beasley, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, and discussed OSCE matters. In his remarks, Beasley noted that the effects of COVID on food security have been dramatic. He warned that 2021 could be a catastrophic year for food security if appropriate resources are not dedicated to the effort, highlighting the possibility of increased famine and mass migration.

OSCE PA President George Tsereteli provided an overview of the Assembly's activities in recent months, including resumed election observation activities, and issues high on the OSCE PA's agenda such as the situation in Belarus and the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Another issue Tsereteli touched on was the institutional crisis in the OSCE, noting that the leadership vacuum is largely caused by a lack of interest for the OSCE at a political level in participating States.

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella reported on the recent work of the International Secretariat, noting that telecommuting is the general rule for the Copenhagen and Vienna offices. He reported on recent election observation missions, underlining the extreme care taken to ensure that all election observers are safe in the context of the pandemic. He also expressed appreciation for the EOMs participants' strict adherence to the COVID guidelines set in place by the PA.

OSCE PA High-Level Expert Lamberto Zannier spoke about his work in developing a process to focus on issues affecting the OSCE, including implementation of commitments, the misuse of the consensus rule, and the issue of appointments. He noted that there are plans being developed to organize events in capitals and that he looks forward to working with parliamentarians in developing a plan to revitalize the OSCE ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025.

In the discussion, OSCE parliamentarians raised issues such as the importance of election observation, the end of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the crisis in and around Ukraine, and human trafficking. Margareta Cederfelt, Acting Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, described how the Committee is keeping active despite the fact that field visits are not currently possible, for example through a recent online briefing on the situation in Lesbos.

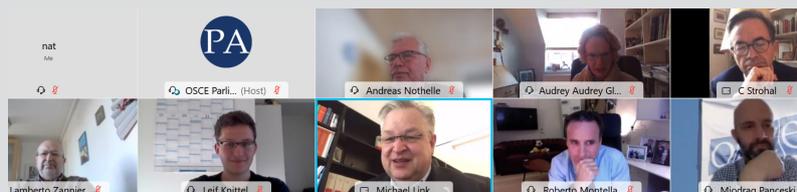
Lord Peter Bowness, who serves as Chair of the Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices, offered an update on ongoing efforts to improve and clarify the Assembly's methods of operation. Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen reported on the OSCE PA's financial situation, noting that the Assembly continues to function in an efficient and cost-effective way, and OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna Ambassador Andreas Nothelle reported on the latest developments at the OSCE headquarters.

Charter of Paris event to focus on history of parliamentary support for the OSCE

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the French Delegation to the OSCE PA are holding an online commemorative event on the topic "The 30th Anniversary of the Charter of Paris: A Parliamentary Perspective", on Friday, 20 November from 14:30 to 16:30 (CET). Tune in to the livestream on the PA's YouTube channel or at www.oscepa.org.

Former ODIHR Directors discuss way forward for OSCE with PA Secretary General and senior staff

Three former ODIHR Directors joined OSCE PA Secretary General and staff Wednesday for a discussion on how to strengthen the OSCE and ensure that the human dimension's role is not diminished. Michael Georg Link, who served as ODIHR Director from 2014 to 2017 and is currently Vice-Chair of the PA's Third Committee, stressed that the Assembly is committed to the human dimension and urged strong co-operation between the PA and ODIHR. Christian Strohal and Audrey Glover, who headed ODIHR from 2003 to 2008 and 1994 to 1997, respectively, stressed that the results are stronger when the PA and ODIHR work closely together.



Secretary General Roberto Montella noted the importance of the strengthened co-operation between the PA and ODIHR on recent election observation missions and the excellent reports the observer leadership of the recent EOMs in Georgia and USA have produced.