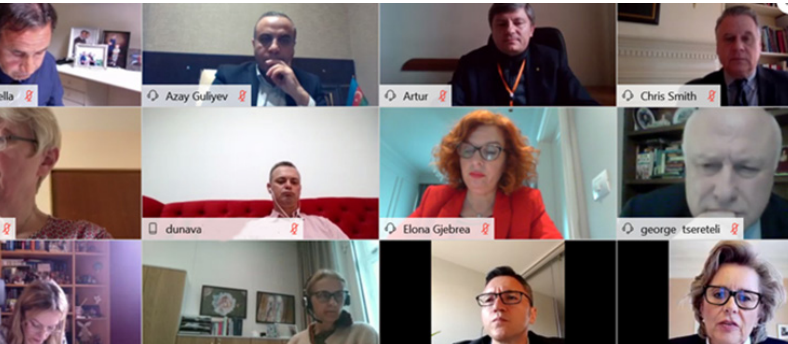


Online Bureau meeting features remarks from OSCE Chair-in-Office and EU Commissioner



The OSCE PA Bureau met online Monday, hearing presentations from OSCE Chair-in-Office Edi Rama, EU Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic, President George Tsereteli (Georgia), Secretary General Roberto Montella, Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen (Denmark), Chairs of OSCE PA Committees, and Special Representatives.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Rama noted the need for exceptional levels of co-operation between executive and legislative branches, stressing that every effort must be made to ensure that parliaments can carry out their core roles of legislation and oversight during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also stressed that the OSCE will have to adapt as an organization to the new realities, with new prioritizations and efforts made to continue its important work on behalf of the people.

Commissioner Lenarcic reported on the European Union's work to address the COVID-19 crisis, noting that the pandemic is exacerbating complex problems. The impact is worst on those who are already in a precarious state, he said, which is why the EU is particularly focused on the impact on conflict zones, he said.

President Tsereteli noted the challenges that the pandemic

has presented to OSCE PA activities. But in spite of this unprecedented challenge, he said, the continued engagement of parliamentarians ensures that the PA remains active.

Secretary General Montella reflected on the state of multilateralism in his remarks, underlining that the COVID-19 crisis has taught us that more international co-operation among governments, more solidarity among peoples, and more collaboration among health institutions is the way forward.

Treasurer Juel-Jensen presented the Assembly's proposed budget for the upcoming financial year and noted that efforts would be made to relieve the financial burden on parliaments that may be facing revenue shortfalls due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

Acting Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) informed the Bureau of the committee's first online meeting, scheduled for 6 May. Austrian parliamentarian Reinhold Lopatka, Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, reported that the CCT is currently exploring the possibility of holding a web-based meeting in early June.

US Congressman Chris Smith, the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues, noted that attention needs to be focused on trafficking during the pandemic. Special Representative on Fighting Corruption Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) reported that a planned conference in Cyprus has been postponed. Norwegian parliamentarian Torill Eidsheim, the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Arctic Issues, urged colleagues to keep the topic of climate change on the PA's agenda going forward.

Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance Ben Cardin (United States) reported that minority and immigrant communities are more vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic because of entrenched inequalities.

Featured tweets @oscepa

OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) tweeted a brief video this week on the topic of how gender inequality is compounded by factors like socio-economic status, LGBTQ2 status, aboriginal and migrant status, race, religion, ethnicity, age, and disability. "This is more so as COVID19 exposes the vulnerabilities that women face," she said.



Dr. Hedy Fry @HedyFry · Apr 25

As Special Gender Rep for @oscepa, I know that gender inequality is compounded by factors like socio-economic status, LGBTQ2 status, aboriginal & migrant status, race, religion, ethnicity & age and disability. This is more so as COVID19 exposes the vulnerabilities that women face



Former OSCE PA Presidents discuss ways to contribute to Assembly work

President George Tsereteli and Secretary General Roberto Montella hosted on Wednesday a videoconference with the PA's previous Presidents of the last 15 years to discuss ways to strengthen PA work. Former Presidents Christine Muttonen (Austria), Ilkka Kanerva (Finland), Ranko Krivokapic (Montenegro), Wolfgang Grossruck (Austria), Riccardo Migliori (Italy), Petros Efthymiou (Greece), Joao Soares (Portugal) and Goran Lennmarker (Sweden) took part in the meeting, which focused on ways that former members of the OSCE PA can continue to contribute to the Assembly.



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