

OSCE parliamentarians gather in Vienna for the 24th Winter Meeting



The 24th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will take place 20-21 February 2025 at the Congress Center Hofburg in Vienna, Austria. Featuring speeches by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland), President of the Austrian National Council Walter Rosenkranz, OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirlioğlu, and special guest Vladimir Kara-Murza, the Winter Meeting will be comprised of meetings of the Standing

Committee, each General Committee, joint sessions of the three General Committees, and the Ad Hoc Committees on Migration and Countering Terrorism, as well as several side events.

The topics for side events include returning Ukrainians from Russian captivity, political prisoners, media freedom, and demographic change. Parliamentarians are also organizing various side events including on regional issues devoted to Southeastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Silk Road Group. On Friday, they will hold a special debate on the theme “Priority Challenges to European Security.”

One of three statutory meetings of the Assembly held each year, the Winter Meeting serves as a valuable opportunity for parliamentarians to engage with the OSCE’s governmental side. It is also when the rapporteurs of the OSCE PA’s General Committees share their preliminary ideas for the reports and draft resolutions they will present at the upcoming Annual Session.

OSCE PA visit to Ukraine concludes with delegation meeting Prime Minister, civil society

Following a Bureau meeting in Kyiv last week, a 22-member delegation of the OSCE PA met with leaders of Ukraine, members of the international community, and representatives of civil society. Interlocutors expressed appreciation for the OSCE PA convening in Kyiv at such a critical juncture and noted that it was the first multilateral organization to do so since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

The delegation, led by President Pia Kauma (Finland) and including members of the Bureau and the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine, met on 12-13 February with Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk, Prime Minister Denys Shmygal, Deputy Foreign Minister Mariana Betsa, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine Ambassador Petr Mareš, and Ukraine’s Delegation to the PA.

The delegation also visited the OSCE’s Support Programme



for Ukraine office in Kyiv and met with the relatives of Maxim Petrov, Dmytro Shabanov, and Vadym Golda – the OSCE staff members detained and sentenced by the Russian Federation.

Meetings with civil society representatives marked the conclusion of the intensive visit. The PA’s delegation included members of 12 national parliaments, support staff and members of the International Secretariat, including Secretary General Roberto Montella.

Pre-Winter Meeting activities focus on Central Asia, environment, gender, youth perspectives



Ahead of the Winter Meeting in Vienna, Second Committee Chair Azay Guliyev met Wednesday with counterparts from the OSCE’s governmental side working on economic and environmental affairs. He met with representatives of Finland’s OSCE Chairpersonship, including Edith Vakkilainen, Head of the Finnish Second Dimension Team, and Amb. Bakyt Dzhusupov, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, and his team. Discussions focused on issues such as climate change, energy, environmental protection, migration, connectivity, and corruption.

OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia Farah Karimi met Wednesday with the Permanent Representatives to the OSCE of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, as well as OSCE officials from the Conflict Prevention Centre’s Central Asia Desk. Special Representative Karimi emphasized the importance of continuing to develop strong co-operation with the Central Asian states, and in this regard highlighted a number of recent and upcoming activities.



Also on Wednesday, the OSCE PA Network of Young Parliamentarians, chaired by David Stogmuller, met at the Parliament of Austria. The meeting included a discussion on strengthening co-operation on youth and security including by engaging with the OSCE, as well as youth perspectives on migration trends, particularly related to the migration of young people. There was also a presentation by a representative of the Finnish OSCE Chairpersonship and the OSCE Group of Friends on Youth and Security.

On Tuesday, Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry (Canada) was in Bratislava, Slovakia, to meet with local NGOs working on gender issues and LGBTQ+ rights. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Special Representative to learn about the NGOs’ work and hear their firsthand impressions on issues related to gender equality in Slovakia. Participants discussed the challenges they face in their daily work and shared strategies for overcoming them, while Dr. Fry provided real-life examples from her political career.