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# **Report of the Canadian Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

**19<sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting**

**Vienna, Austria**

**February 20-21, 2020**

## Report

A delegation of three Canadian parliamentarians attended the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA) Winter Meeting in Vienna, Austria on February 20 and 21, 2020. The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** led the delegation, which also included the **Honourable Senator Patricia Bovey** and **Mr. Kerry Diotte, M.P.**. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Matthieu Boulianne, Association Secretary for the Canadian Delegation to the OSCE PA.

### 2020 OSCE PA Winter Meeting

Parliamentarians from across the OSCE region, together with representatives of the "Partners for Cooperation" states, met in Vienna, Austria for the 19th OSCE PA Winter Meeting.<sup>1</sup> Over the course of two days, many subjects were discussed including anti-semitism, intolerance, protracted conflicts, climate change and human rights. The agenda included opening and closing joint sessions, as well as meetings of each of the OSCE PA's three General Committees: Political Affairs and Security; Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment; and Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. Additional meetings were also on the agenda including a meeting of the Standing Committee, as well as the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration.

### Standing Committee

The meeting of the Standing Committee was held on the morning of February 20 and reunited the Parliamentary Assembly's (PA) heads of delegation and members of the Bureau. President George Tsereteli (Georgia) presented his report outlining his activities since the Autumn Meeting in Marrakesh in October 2019. President Tsereteli made note of recent work including better partnerships with national leaders, especially in the Mediterranean Region, a recent Election Observation Mission in Kazakhstan, addressing the OSCE permanent Council twice in the last year, and highlighting the PA's involvement in Ukraine to support a full ceasefire in the conflict area of Crimea. He concluded by noting the importance of women and youth in the Parliamentary Assembly and stressed recent activities which showcased the PA's desire to ensure better representation and involvement.

Following the report from the President, Mr. Peter Juel-Jensen (Treasurer), Mr. Roberto Montella (Secretary General) and Lord Peter Bowness (Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Working Practices) each presented their respective reports. Other representatives briefed the Committee or presented a report including Mr. Reinhold Lopatka (Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism), Vice-President Ms. Margareta Cederfelt (Acting Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Migration), Mr. Pascal Allizard (Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs), Ms. Irene Charalambides (Special Representative on Fighting Corruption) and Ms. Pia Kauma (Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement).

### ***Activities of the Canadian Delegation:***

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the remarks and reports presented at the 19th Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA are available at [2020 Winter Meeting, Vienna.](#)

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** was present at the Standing Committee but did not speak.

### **Opening Joint Session of the OSCE PA's Three General Committees**

President of the Austrian National Council, Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, welcomed delegates to the Opening Joint Session of the OSCE PA's three General Committees. Alongside OSCE PA President Mr. George Tsereteli and Deputy Foreign Minister of Albania Mr. Etjen Xhafaj (representing the OSCE Chairmanship), they discussed the importance of a multilateral approach to tackling the current geopolitical climate characterized by tensions and crises and stressed the need to reflect on the Parliamentary Assembly's original core values.

A question and answer session followed the remarks, during which time delegates had the opportunity to pose questions to the presenters.

#### ***Activities of the Canadian Delegation:***

The Opening Joint Session of the OSCE PA's Three General Committees was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation. During the question and answer session, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** asked a specific question to the Secretary General with regard to gender representation at the 2019 Morocco Fall Session. **Mr. Diotte, M.P.** also directed a question to the President with regards to de-escalating tensions in Ukraine and how the PA would promote paths of dialogue in order to de-escalate the situation. Both the Secretary General and the President took the questions into consideration.

### **General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions (Third General Committee)**

The Third General Committee was held concurrently with that of the Second General Committee on the afternoon of February 20. Chair Mr. Kyriakos Hadjiyanni (Cyprus) informed the Committee of his visit to Ukraine in December 2019 and related the humanitarian situation of people in conflict-related regions of the OSCE.

Rapporteur Ms. Kari Henriksen (Norway) then presented her ideas for a report to be tabled at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Session to be held in Vancouver, Canada. She noted the decline of trust in public institutions and governments across the region and stressed the importance for parliamentarians to uphold human rights domestically by means of introducing adequate legislation. In her concluding remarks, she stressed the importance of allowing for peaceful protest in order to respect citizens' human rights and to not resort to intimidation or violence.

#### ***Activities of the Canadian Delegation:***

All members of the Canadian Delegation attended the meeting of the Third General Committee.

### **General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment (Second General Committee)**

Chair Mr. Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) opened the meeting of the Second General Committee by indicating that the issues covered in this specific Committee had a direct impact on the stability of OSCE PA countries and that of the safety of its citizens. In keeping with the same line of thought, the committee's rapporteur – Ms. Elona Gjebrea Hoxha (Albania) – touched upon the direct impact of environmental issues such as climate change and water security on the regions represented at the PA. Ms. Hoxha then addressed the issues of innovation and technology, good governance and migration management. She stressed the importance of innovation and digitization as keys to ensure sustainability in an inclusive economy.

Following the remarks by the Rapporteur, Ambassador Sherzod Asadov (Uzbekistan) presented the 2020 Economic and Environmental Committee Work Plan and detailed the Committee's next nine meetings scheduled for 2020. Ambassador Vuk Žugić, Co-ordinator of the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Activities, presented the Work Plan of his office for 2020. The focus of his remarks outlined the efforts needed to align civil society, businesses and academia. As noted by Ambassador Vuk Žugić, formulation and implementation of better environmental policies will ensure stability in the Region, such as combating corruption, enhancing connectivity, water management, environmental good governance, climate change, and energy security.

The General Committee also heard a special debate on climate change. Ms. Torill Eidsheim (Norway), OSCE PA Special Representative on Arctic Issues, said that climate change is a global crisis with multifaceted security implications. She noted that, although effects are often more noticeable in the north, that the effects on the Arctic can be seen and felt across the entire planet. She called for all politicians and legislators to turn their commitments to action.

During the debate, delegates from across OSCE PA countries echoed the presentations of the Chair, the Rapporteur and all other guests, in stressing the importance to minimize greenhouse gasses and to ensure food and energy security for all of its people. It was also noted that economic and environmental issues need to go hand in hand in order to bring stability in the Region.

#### ***Activities of the Canadian Delegation:***

The meeting of the Second General Committee was not attended by Canadian Delegation as they were in the concurrent meeting on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.

#### **General Committee on Political Affairs and Security (First General Committee)**

Chair Costel Neculai Dunava (Romania) opened the First General Committee and welcomed a series of invited guests who addressed the Committee. Ambassador Neil Bush (United States), Chair of the Security Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council; Ambassador Rauf Engin Soysal (Turkey), Chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE; Ambassador Lamberto Zannier (Italy), OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä (Finland), Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre. The OSCE representatives all shared their working programmes and priorities for 2020.

Following the presentations there was an opening discussion. Amongst many subjects, the theme of cybersecurity surfaced many times as delegates could all agree that cyberthreats see no borders and that many countries are ill-equipped to counter cyberattacks. Committee rapporteur Mr. Laurynas Kasčiūnas (Lithuania) emphasized that more efforts are needed to tackle these new threats.

### ***Activities of the Canadian Delegation:***

All members of the Canadian delegation attended the First General Committee. During the debate, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** took the floor and encouraged the member countries to implement national action plans in the realm of conflict resolution and conflict prevention. On that topic, and in her capacity as Special Representative on Gender, **Dr. Fry** also stressed the importance to ensure proper balance of women in conflict prevention and peacekeeping. She did note that a majority of member countries do not recognize women's right to sexual health and reproductive rights.

### **Closing Joint Session of the Three General Committees**

The closing joint session marked the end of the 2020 OSCE PA Winter Session. President George Tsereteli opened the Joint Session by inviting H.E. Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the Austrian National Council to address the Session. In his capacity as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, Rabbi Andrew Baker was also invited to address anti-Semitism in the OSCE PA Region. The Rabbi stressed that anti-Semitism often takes many forms and can be seen across all colours of the political spectrum.

In her capacity as the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Gender Issues, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** was invited to the podium to deliver her report in the Joint Session.

Special Representative **Fry** applauded the efforts made by the PA and its members in achieving gender equality over the years. She noted as well that 2020 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and that of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. With all the good efforts and measurable changes seen over the years, she underlined that efforts towards gender equality need to continue and need to be supported in a continued fashion. This year's report would focus its attention on gender-based violence against women in politics and journalism.

Following her closing remarks on Gender Issues, **Dr. Fry** took the opportunity and reiterated the excitement of the Canadian Delegation hosting the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the OSCE PA in Vancouver, British Columbia in July 2020.

Following **Dr. Fry**, the Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance, Senator Ben Cardin (United-States) addressed the joint session via a video link from Washington. The Senator told the Joint Session that hatred and intolerance pose real threats to democracies. He urged legislators to speak out against those who threaten the democratic processes and seek to divide the societal fabric found in most OSCE PA countries.

Ms. Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), Mr. Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) and Mr. Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine) also reported on Election observation missions in Belarus, Ukraine and Azerbaijan that had taken place since July 2019.

### ***Activities of the Canadian Delegation:***

All members of the Canadian delegation attended the Closing Joint Session. **Senator Patricia Bovey** spoke in support of the address by **Dr. Fry**. **Senator Bovey** indicated that female journalists in both the United States and in Canada are victim of verbal and online harassment. She continued to state that female underrepresentation in politics is directly associated with intimidation and requires urgent attention and action.

### **Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration**

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** represented the Canadian delegation on the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration which took place on February 21, 2020. This meeting served as an opportunity for **Dr. Fry** to informally share the plans for the committee's work while in Vancouver in July 2020 during the Annual Session. **Dr. Fry** gave the committee an oversight of Canada's integration programmes and of its private sponsorship of refugees which is formalized in Canadian legislation. Finally, the members were informed that an official special invitation would be extended to them to attend a Citizenship Ceremony to be held on Canada's National Day, July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Additional Activities of the Canadian Delegation**

On February 19, 2020, the Canadian delegation met with Mr. Daniel Barbarie, Counselor on Human Dimension, Delegation of Canada to the OSCE. He provided a briefing on Canada's priorities at the OSCE, and discussed such issues as to the protection of journalists, the PA's involvement in developing its human dimension, the current security situation in Ukraine, Canada–Russia relations, current migration issues in Europe, and the rise of nationalism and populism in the OSCE region.

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** also met with Secretary General Roberto Montella on February 19. Present at the meeting were Mr. Gustavo Pallares, Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Guido Almerigogna, Executive Advisor to the Secretary General, Mr. Miodrag Pančeski, Chief Diplomatic Advisor, Vienna Liaison Office and Ms. Freyja Koci, Executive Assistant to the Secretary General. The discussions revolved around the PA's commitment to commit in ensuring better representation from all genders when conducting assemblies and inviting keynote speakers. As Special Representative on Gender, **Dr. Fry** reminded the importance to ensure that women be implicated in all discussions and that pictures published of the events should be equally balanced. The Secretary General did agree with the suggestion and committed to reminding the hosts of future assemblies to be mindful of the PA's engagement towards gender.

**Dr. Fry** had a meeting on February 20 with Mrs. Amarsanaa Darisuren, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, to discuss upcoming activities in 2020. The discussion revolved around data-based analysis to be used for recommendations in her capacity as the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Gender Issues. They also exchanged views

on multiple reports and studies, notably a report published by the OSCE in January entitled “Implementing Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region”.

**Dr. Fry** and **Senator Bovey** also had the opportunity of meeting privately with Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, on February 21. The exchange focused primarily on the role of women as the solution in the prevention of conflicts. All agreed that more needed to be done to empower women at the regional level in order to bring real change at the PA level. The three discussed the importance of intersectionality of gender and other factors as a method to capture statistical data that is relevant. The group also spoke about the importance to include youth groups and spokespersons on the international political scene.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.  
Director

Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation  
in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)

### **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Vienna, Austria
<b>DATES</b>	February 20-21, 2020
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Patricia Bovey
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Hedy Fry Mr. Kerry Diotte
STAFF	Mr. Matthieu Boulianne
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 14,210.88
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 3,307.26
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 50.85
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 2,301.17
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 0

<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$ 205.70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 20,075.86</b>