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# **Report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly**

## **22<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting**

### **Vienna, Austria**

### **From February 23 to 24, 2023**

## Report

From 23 to 24 February 2023, a delegation of six Canadian parliamentarians attended the 22<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) which was held in Vienna, Austria. The delegation comprised:

- The Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., head of delegation;
- The Honourable Senator Rosemary Moodie;
- The Honourable Senator David Wells;
- Mr. John Aldag, M.P.;
- Mr. Don Davies, M.P.;
- Ms. Kristina Michaud, M.P.

The delegation was assisted by Anne-Marie Therrien-Tremblay, Advisor with the Library of Parliament, and Matthieu Boulianne, the Association's Secretary.

### **2023 OSCE PA WINTER MEETING**

Parliamentarians from 52 parliaments from across the OSCE region met in Vienna, Austria, for the 22<sup>nd</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting. The Winter Meeting included a meeting of the Standing Committee, meetings of each of the three General Committees: Political Affairs and Security; Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment; and Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, as well as two joint sessions of the three General Committees. A number of other meetings and side events were also held over the course of the Winter Meeting, including a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and a meeting of the Sub-committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices. A meeting of the "Call for Action: Helsinki + 50" initiative was held on 22 February 2023, the day before the Winter Meeting began.<sup>1</sup>

### **STANDING COMMITTEE**

The Standing Committee – which comprises the OSCE PA's heads of delegation, the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and the officers of the General Committees – met on the afternoon of 24 February 2023. The meeting was opened by OSCE PA President, Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden). President Cederfelt first delivered her report, outlining the recent activities of the OSCE PA. Speaking of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and the related challenges it poses to the OSCE, President Cederfelt noted that the meeting of the Standing Committee coincided with the one-year anniversary of the date on which Russia launched its full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. As a special guest of the President, Belarusian opposition leader Ms. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya then addressed the Standing Committee. She spoke about the movement for democracy in

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<sup>1</sup> The Bureau of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) also met on 22 February 2023, but there are no Canadian delegates on this body.

Belarus and called on members of the OSCE PA to raise awareness about the deterioration of her country's human rights situation.

The Treasurer of the OSCE PA, Mr. Peter Juel-Jensen (Denmark) presented his report and the audited accounts of the OSCE PA for the 2021–2022 financial year. The Secretary General of the OSCE PA, Roberto Montella, then presented his report on the work of the International Secretariat for the November 2022 to February 2023 period. In addition, Vice-President Pere Joan Pons (Spain) delivered a report on the OSCE PA's participation in the observation mission of the United States November 2022 mid-term elections. Chairs of the Ad Hoc Committees and OSCE PA Special Representatives – including **Dr. Fry** in her capacity as OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues – delivered presentations about their work.<sup>2</sup>

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

As head of the delegation, **Dr. Fry** represented the Canadian delegation at the Standing Committee. In response to President Cederfelt's report to the Standing Committee, **Dr. Fry** acknowledged the challenges faced by the OSCE and the OSCE PA in the past year and congratulated President Cederfelt on her leadership during that period. She also expressed solidarity with Ukrainians.

Speaking in her capacity as OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues, **Dr. Fry** introduced the main themes of her annual report on gender issues to be presented at the OSCE PA 2023 Annual Session in Vancouver. She explained that her 2023 Gender Report would focus on understanding and addressing the gendered impacts of the war in Ukraine. She noted that the war in Ukraine has had unique and disproportionate impacts on women.<sup>3</sup>

### **OPENING JOINT SESSION OF THE THREE GENERAL COMMITTEES**

During the opening Joint Session of the three General Committees held on 23 February 2023, members of the OSCE PA heard from Mr. Wolfgang, President of the Austrian National Council Sobotka, President Cederfelt, and Ambassador Luca Fratini, the Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, who delivered remarks on behalf of OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid. Mr. Bujar Osmani, OSCE Chairperson in Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, also addressed the assembly by video message. The presentations largely focussed on Russia's war in Ukraine and its impact on the OSCE and its parliamentary dimension.

A question and answer session followed the remarks, during which delegates had the opportunity to pose questions to the presenters. At the beginning of the question and answer session, Mr. Peter Osusky (Slovakia) took the floor to read a statement on behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, which had opted not to attend the Winter Meeting because of the presence of Russian and Belarussian parliamentarians. The statement raised objections to Russia's participation at the meeting and called on the OSCE PA to sanction those who violate OSCE principles.

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<sup>2</sup> For access to selected reports and remarks presented at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA, see OSCE PA, [Winter Meeting, Vienna, February 2023](#).

<sup>3</sup> See The Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry, [Address by Dr. Fry, Special Representative on Gender Issues to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly](#), 22<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

All members of the Canadian delegation attended the opening joint session of the Three General Committees.

### **GENERAL COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY**

The meeting of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security held on 23 February 2023 was opened by the Chair of the committee, Mr. Richard Hudson (United States). In his remarks, Mr. Hudson emphasized that Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine contravenes the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>4</sup>

Next, members of the OSCE leadership delivered presentations. Ambassador Stelian Stoian, Chairperson of the Security Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Romania to the OSCE, outlined the recent work of the OSCE Security Committee and noted that the OSCE had been able to continue its work despite the significant impact of Russia's war in Ukraine on the OSCE and its participating States.

Ambassador Siniša Bencun, Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE, spoke about the Forum for Security Co-Operation and its role. He underlined the deterioration of arms control and confidence building regimes in the OSCE region and stressed the importance of increasing cooperation and dialogue among OSCE participating States.

The presentation by Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), focused on the HCNM's mandate to monitor and respond to signs of rising tensions relating to national minority issues. He underlined the need for participating States to adopt policies to protect minorities from political instrumentalization, including in conflict situations.

Presentation by Ambassador Tuula Yrjölä, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, spoke about the OSCE's contribution in the international effort to address the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine, including the deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission and the Observer Mission at the Donetsk and Gukovo border crossing points since 2014.

The presentations were followed by an open debate on the theme of "One Year of Russia's War Against Ukraine: understanding OSCE's Role, Functioning, and Contributions."

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

During the special debate, **Dr. Fry** thanked the presenters and stressed that Russia's actions threaten not only the security of Ukraine but that of all OSCE participating States. She emphasized the specific impacts of war and armed conflict on women, including sexual violence and human trafficking.

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<sup>4</sup> OSCE, [Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act](#), 1 August 1975.

**Ms. Michaud** strongly condemned Russia's war on Ukraine and expressed support for Ukraine and its people. She highlighted the contribution of parliamentary diplomacy to conflict resolution, international mediation, reconciliation, and peacebuilding.

## **GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

The meeting of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment held on 23 February 2023 was opened by the Chair of the committee, Mr. Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan). In his remarks, Mr. Guliyev drew attention to the consequences of the war in Ukraine, including its economic and environmental repercussions across the OSCE region. He underlined three issues prioritized by the committee officers for 2023: socio-economic instability, energy and food insecurity, and climate change.

Ms. Gudrun Kugler, Rapporteur of the committee, then outlined ideas for the committee's report to be presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Session in Vancouver. After speaking about current economic and environmental challenges faced by the OSCE region, specifically those resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine, Ms. Kugler announced that her report would focus on economic security, including energy security, demographic changes, good governance and fighting corruption.

Next, members of the OSCE leadership opened the debate on "Advancing a common OSCE approach in promoting economic and environmental security." In his presentation, Ambassador Florian Raunig, Chairperson of the Economic and Environmental Committee and Permanent Representative of Austria to the OSCE, provided an outlook of the work plan and activities of the Economic and Environmental Committee in 2023. The Economic and Environmental Committee, he explained, will divide its attention between economic and environmental topics. He informed delegates that, in addition to the committee's regular meetings, additional meetings had been planned on topics such as water management, food security, economic crimes and energy security. Ambassador Igli Hasani, Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, provided an overview of his office's priorities for 2023. Among other priorities, the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities will focus its work on climate change and energy security, including as regards energy infrastructure resilience. Mr. Hasani also underlined his office's commitment to help Ukraine mitigate current and future economic and environmental challenges in the context of Russia's invasion, and to assist Central Asian participating States in addressing the impacts of the situation in Afghanistan.

After this, the committee turned its attention to the theme of "Affordable, secure, clean and sustainable energy in the OSCE region: prospects and challenges." Mr. Guliyev delivered remarks on behalf of Vice-President Pons, highlighting the links between energy security, sustainable development and climate change, and encouraging OSCE participating States to move toward more sustainable, affordable and diverse sources of energy. Mr. Wei Huang, Director of the Division of Energy Planning, Information and Knowledge Management at the Department of Nuclear Energy of the International Atomic Energy Agency, spoke about the potential of low-carbon technologies – in particular nuclear energy – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. Steven Koonin, Professor in

the Department of Civil and Urban Engineering at New York University Tandon School of Engineering and Former U.S. Under-Secretary for Science, said that, as OSCE governments take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they need to prioritize the production of affordable and reliable energy sources. For his part, **Mr. Aldag** focused his remarks on the pressing need to achieve a green energy transition. Noting that Russia's war on Ukraine has resulted in a global energy crisis and presented significant challenges for the energy and environmental security of the OSCE region, he nonetheless stressed that the renewable resources and technologies required to meet energy needs in the OSCE region are already available. In speaking about the resolution he sponsored at the OSCE PA 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Session in Birmingham, "Accelerating the Green Energy Transition", **Mr. Aldag** encouraged OSCE participating States to further invest in renewable energies to accelerate the green energy transition.<sup>5</sup> An open debate followed the presentations.

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

**Senator Wells** took the floor during the first debate on "Advancing a common OSCE approach in promoting economic and environmental security." **Senator Wells** stressed that adopting a coordinated approach to economic sanctions in the OSCE region is essential to effectively impede Russia's ability to continue its war of aggression against Ukraine. He provided examples of efforts taken by Canada and its allies to increase sanctions coordination.

### **GENERAL COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS**

The meeting of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions held on 23 February 2023 was opened by the Chair of the committee, Mr. Nikoloz Samkharadze (Georgia), who discussed the committee's efforts to bring attention to human rights violations, challenges to democracy, the persecution of the media and the treatment of civil society in the OSCE region.

Mr. Johan Büser (Sweden), Rapporteur of the committee, then provided an overview of his plans for his report to the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Session in Vancouver in July 2023. He stressed the importance of considering the humanitarian impacts of the war in Ukraine. Mr. Büser indicated that his report would focus on supporting those affected by the war in Ukraine, addressing the socio-economic consequences of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, and protecting minorities' rights.

Following these remarks, the committee heard from members of the OSCE leadership. Mr. Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), discussed ODIHR's activities in Ukraine, including its efforts to document violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Ukraine through the deployment of monitors to conduct interviews on the ground. In a video message to the committee, Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, Representative on Freedom of the Media, spoke about the ways in which Russia's war in Ukraine has affected Ukraine's media sector and condemned Russia's treatment of journalists and independent media. She reminded

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<sup>5</sup> OSCE PA, "Resolution on Accelerating the Green Energy Transition" in [Birmingham Declaration](#), 2–6 July 2022, pp. 47–50.

participants that media freedom is essential to regional security. Next, Ambassador Anne-Marie Callan, Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Ireland to the OSCE, stressed that the situation in Ukraine must remain the focus of the OSCE's work in 2023. She noted that addressing the humanitarian and refugee crisis faced by the OSCE region because of Russia's war in Ukraine is a priority for the OSCE Human Dimension Committee.

Next, participants held a debate on "Accountability for human rights abuses during times of conflict", beginning with presentations from two panelists. Judge Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, President of the Appeals Division of the International Criminal Court, discussed challenges relating to the prosecution of individuals responsible for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression, in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Statute. Dr. Veronika Bílková, Head of the Department of Public International Law at Charles University – who participated in two missions under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism – presented the OSCE Moscow Mechanism Experts Mission reports on "Violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Committed in Ukraine" produced in April and July 2022.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

During the debate on "Accountability for human rights abuses during times of conflict," **Mr. Davies** discussed the role of international organizations in enhancing accountability for human rights violations in war and conflict contexts, both in the OSCE region and around the world. He stressed that organizations like the OSCE must champion respect for the rule of law, including by demanding that international law be applied fairly and consistently across its participating States.

**Senator Moodie's** remarks during the debate focused on trafficking of children in war and armed conflict contexts. She highlighted that one in every three victims of human trafficking globally is a child. **Senator Moodie** referred to the Birmingham Declaration, which, among other recommendations, called on OSCE participating States to enact legislation to prevent human trafficking and to protect Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons from falling prey to human traffickers.<sup>6</sup>

## CLOSING JOINT SESSION OF THE THREE GENERAL COMMITTEES

On 24 February 2024, President Cederfelt opened the closing Joint Session of the three General Committees. She announced that the OSCE PA Bureau – which comprises the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and officers of the General Committees – had adopted a document titled "Action on the One-Year Anniversary of Russia's War Against Ukraine and the International Legal Order."<sup>7</sup>

The closing Joint Session featured reports by OSCE PA special representatives who hold mandates related to the war in Ukraine: Ms. Daniela De Ridder (Germany), OSCE PA Special Representative on Eastern Europe; Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka (Austria), OSCE PA Special Representative on Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine; Vice-President

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<sup>6</sup> OSCE PA, [Birmingham Declaration](#), 2–6 July 2022.

<sup>7</sup> OSCE PA Bureau, [Action on the One-Year Anniversary of Russia's War Against Ukraine and the International Legal Order](#), Joint Statement of the OSCE PA Bureau, 24 February 2023.

Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom), Chair of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration; Mr. John Whittingdale (United Kingdom), OSCE PA Special Rapporteur on War Crimes in Ukraine; and Mr. Steve Cohen (United States), OSCE PA Special Representative on Political Prisoners.

These reports were followed by a general debate on the subject of “One Year In: Russia’s Continued Full-Scale War on Ukraine.”

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

During the general debate, **Dr. Fry** expressed solidarity with Ukraine and strongly denounced Russia’s war and its impacts on civilians, including women and children. She noted the vote at the UN General Assembly the previous day, in which 141 countries voted to call on Russia to withdraw all of its military forces from Ukraine’s territory within its internationally recognized borders.<sup>8</sup>

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

### **A. INFORMAL MEETING OF THE “CALL FOR ACTION - HELSINKI +50” INITIATIVE**

On 22 February 2023, Canadian delegates attended an informal meeting of the “Call for Action - Helsinki +50” initiative. Participants heard from Mr. Cornelius Friesendorf, Head of the Centre for OSCE Research and Research Fellow at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy; Dr. Walter Kemp, Director of Global Strategy at Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime; and Ambassador Rasa Ostrauskaite, European Union Permanent Representative to the OSCE. The meeting focused on the impacts of Russia’s war in Ukraine on the OSCE and sought to foster reflection on the organization’s role in light of the current security situation in the region.

### **B. MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION**

On 23 February 2023, **Dr. Fry** attended the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration. This meeting served as an opportunity for **Dr. Fry** to informally present ideas for work the committee could undertake during the OSCE PA Annual Session in Vancouver in July 2023. **Dr. Fry** also shared best practice regarding the integration and settlement of newcomers to Canada.

### **C. MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON RULES OF PROCEDURE AND WORKING PRACTICES**

On 24 February 2023, **Dr. Fry** attended the meeting of the Sub-committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices, of which she is a member. Discussions focused on the modernization and adaptation of the OSCE PA Rules of Procedure, as well as on changes to the Rules of Procedure proposed by members of the sub-committee.

### **D. OTHER MEETINGS**

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<sup>8</sup> United Nations General Assembly, [Resolution ES-11/6](#), 23 February 2023.



The Canadian delegation participated in the following meetings on the sidelines of the OSCE PA 22<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting:

- A bilateral meeting with the Ukrainian delegation on 22 February 2023.
- A briefing session with Jocelyn Kinnear, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the OSCE, on 22 February 2023.
- A side event on the theme of “The Human Rights Situation in Belarus – a Struggle for Democracy” hosted by the Swedish delegation on 23 February 2023.

Respectfully submitted

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.

Director, Canadian Delegation to the OSCE PA

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Vienna, Austria
<b>DATES</b>	From February 23 to 24, 2023
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Rosemary Moodie Hon. David Wells
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Dr. Hedy Fry John Aldag Don Davies Kristina Michaud
STAFF	Matthieu Boulianne Anne-Marie Therrien-Tremblay
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 42,851.92
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 10,341.44
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 687.33
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 7,124.13
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$ 5.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 61,009.82</b>