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

22nd Autumn Meeting

Dublin, Ireland

From October 2 to 4, 2024

Report

From 2 to 4 October 2024, a delegation of four Canadian parliamentarians participated in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA) 22nd Autumn Meeting, which was held in Dublin, Ireland. The delegation comprised:

- The Honourable Percy E. Downe, Senator, acting Head of delegation;
- The Honourable Pierrette Ringuette, Senator;
- Mr. Charlie Angus, M.P.; and
- Ms. Kristina Michaud, M.P

The delegation was assisted by Mr. Brian Hermon, Advisor.

22nd OSCE PA Autumn Meeting

Parliamentarians from across the OSCE region met in Dublin, Ireland, for the OSCE PA's 22nd Autumn Meeting. The Autumn Meeting consisted of various thematic sessions, as well as meetings of the Standing Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and other committees and working groups. The Mediterranean Forum, which involves OSCE participating States as well as OSCE partners for cooperation, took place on the sidelines of the Autumn Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee – which comprises OSCE PA Heads of Delegation, the Assembly's President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer, as well as the officers of each General Committee – met on 2 October 2024. **Senator Downe** represented the Canadian delegation at the Standing Committee.

The meeting began with a presentation by OSCE PA President Ms. Pia Kauma (Finland) regarding her recent activities and engagement with external stakeholders. The Standing Committee then heard from Mr. Miodrag Pančesk, Chief Diplomatic Advisor in the Vienna Liaison Office, regarding various institutional challenges facing the OSCE. Following that presentation, Mr. Johan Buser (Sweden), Treasurer of the OSCE PA, updated the Assembly on the OSCE PA's budget for 2024/2025, including the current status of contributions by participating States, and spoke about the upcoming business and performance audit of the OSCE PA for the 2023/2024 financial year. The Treasurer's presentation was followed by remarks from OSCE PA Secretary General Mr. Roberto Montella, who spoke about the security environment in the OSCE region and the need for the OSCE PA to strengthen its peace and security architecture and mechanisms.

The Standing Committee agreed to a proposal by Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) to amend the Rules of Procedure to allow the OSCE PA president to be elected to a two-year, non-renewable term. Previously, the OSCE PA President could be elected to a one-year term with the possibility of one re-election. The election of the next OSCE PA President at the 2025 Annual Session in Porto, Portugal, will be conducted in accordance with this rule change.

PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

The theme of the 22nd Autumn Meeting was *Fifty Years After Helsinki: The Role of Parliaments in Reinforcing the OSCE's Comprehensive Model of Peace and Security*. It was divided in three sessions according to the three dimensions of security recognized by the OSCE.

A. INAUGURAL SESSION

The Parliamentary Conference began with remarks by Mr. Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD, Speaker of Ireland's Lower House (Dáil Éireann) of parliament; OSCE PA President Ms. Pia Kauma; and Mr. Michael Creed TD, Head of the Irish Delegation to the OSCE PA.

Speaker Ó Fearghaíl spoke about the role of the OSCE PA in reinforcing interparliamentary dialogue and advancing regional security. Reflecting on the Good Friday Agreement, he underlined the importance of peace building and conflict resolution and the role that parliamentarians can play to advance national reconciliation. He also commented on what he referred to as Russia's illegal war against Ukraine as well as the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. President Kauma stressed the need to support and enhance the role of the OSCE to foster peace. She further commented that the strength and purpose of the OSCE is its ability to foster unity and to uphold the organization's founding principles and commitments. For his part, Mr. Creed welcomed delegates to Dublin and underlined the role that the OSCE PA and parliamentarians can play to promote regional peace and security.

B. SESSION 1: THE OSCE'S CONFLICT CYCLE: DIALOGUE FACILITATION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, MEDIATION SUPPORT, CONCILIATION AND POST-CONFLICT REHABILITATION

Session I was entitled *The OSCE's Conflict Cycle: Dialogue Facilitation, Conflict Resolution, Mediation Support, Conciliation and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*. The session involved addresses by Mr. Bertie Ahern, former Prime Minister of Ireland; Mr. Shawn DeCaluwe, Deputy Director for Operations Service, OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre; and Mr. Argyro Kartsonaki, Senior Researcher, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg.

Mr. Ahern reflected on the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement. He indicated that the primary lesson of the conflict was that peace processes and post-conflict reconciliation can succeed with time. He also spoke about the role that women played in the Northern Ireland peace process and noted, more broadly, that peace agreements which are negotiated with the full and meaningful participation of women are more durable. He also advocated for the role that young people can play in peace processes.

Mr. DeCaluwe talked about the work of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, including its various tools and mechanisms aimed at preventing conflict. He noted that more inclusive peace processes lead to better outcomes and underlined the role that the OSCE can play to convene parties to a conflict and build trust. He added that parliamentarians can play a key role in maintaining accountability for the implementation of peace agreements.

Ms. Kartsonaki spoke about the role of international actors in resolving conflict. She noted, for example, that UN mediators can bring legitimacy to peace processes. She also

underlined the need for multi-level dialogue with parties to a conflict and to create space for warring parties to convene. In this regard, Ms. Kartsonaki said that the OSCE's consensus-based system could offer a comparative advantage in supporting peace processes as compared to other multilateral bodies. She further underlined the role that parliaments can play in the post-conflict phase to uphold peace agreements.

The open debate saw interventions by dozens of delegates on topics that included the war in Ukraine, conflict and tension in the Middle East, and early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms in the OSCE region.

1. ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

Senator Downe spoke during the open debate about the conflict cycle in the OSCE region. He underlined the need for the OSCE PA to take concrete action to reinforce its peace and security architecture in light of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other regional security challenges. He also commended the strength and resilience of the Ukrainian people in the context of the war with Russia.

C. SESSION 2: ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS: THE ROLE OF MPS IN FULFILLING GLOBAL COMMITMENTS AHEAD OF COP29

Session II was entitled *Addressing the climate crisis: the role of MPs in fulfilling global commitments ahead of COP29*. It included addresses by Eamon Ryan, Minister for the Environment, Communications and Climate, and Transport, Government of Ireland; Sinead Walsh, Climate Director at Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs; and Jim Skea, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Professor of Sustainable Energy at Imperial College, London.

Minister Ryan spoke about the upcoming Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting which is taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024 (COP 29). He underscored the need for parties to commit to stronger Nationally Determined Contributions at that summit in order to urgently cut greenhouse gas emissions and curb global warming. He also made a link between global warming and forced migration.

In her remarks, Ms. Walsh highlighted Ireland's 2025 budget which announced an increased commitment toward international climate finance. She further highlighted the need to invest in new technologies in order to support climate change mitigation and adaptation. Mr. Skea concluded the panel presentation by providing delegates with information on the latest IPCC report on climate change. To limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, Mr. Skea said that the international community must follow a pathway toward achieving net zero emissions by mid-century.

During the open debate, delegates highlighted the impact that climate change was having on their individual countries and across the broader OSCE region. Delegates also underscored the need for political will in favour of stronger climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. In this regard, many delegates focused on the role that parliamentarians can play to hold governments to account for the climate change commitments that they have made.

1. ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

During the open debate, **Mr. Angus** spoke about the impact of recent wildfires in Canada. He also urged OSCE participating States to uphold their international climate commitments and accelerate the green energy transition.

Ms. Michaud's remarks in the open debate focused on the need to address climate change on an urgent basis. Highlighting the objective of promoting a swift and equitable transition toward renewable energy, she called on parliamentarians in the OSCE region to take ambitious action to fight climate change.

D. SESSION 3: ENHANCING MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN THE OSCE REGION TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Session III of the 22nd Autumn Meeting was entitled *Enhancing Migration Governance in the OSCE Region to Foster Sustainable Development*. Session III included addresses by Sarah Leonard, Jean Monnet Chair on Migration, Security and Intelligence in the European Union and Co-Director of DCU Conflict Institute; and Amr Taha, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor, Regional Office for Europe, International Organization for Migration in Vienna.

Ms. Leonard discussed recent trends in global migration. She highlighted some of the “push and pull” factors that lead people to migrate, which include conflict and war, poverty and economic opportunities and the effects of climate change and natural disasters. She also discussed the economic contributions that migrants make to countries of destination, and encouraged European countries to work together to improve migration governance on the continent. For his part, Mr. Taha encouraged delegates to look at migration from not only a security angle but to also consider how migration may contribute to economic development and sustainable development. He also provided recommendations on ways that parliamentarians can better leverage the OSCE PA to strengthen migration governance internationally, including by countering misinformation and disinformation.

During the open debate, delegates spoke about various factors that are affecting the movement of people in the OSCE region and globally. Delegates argued that migration presents both opportunities and challenges and encouraged the OSCE PA to continue to focus attention on supporting regional and international approaches to effective migration governance.

1. ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

In the open debate, **Senator Ringuette** spoke about migration governance in the OSCE region. While acknowledging that the impacts of migration vary across the OSCE region, she stressed that global cooperation on migration issues is essential and encouraged the OSCE PA to support international efforts aimed at improving migration governance.

E. CLOSING SESSION

The parliamentary session concluded with remarks by Senator Jerry Buttimer, Chair of Ireland's Upper House (Seanad Éireann), and Michael Creed, Head of the Irish Delegation to the OSCE PA.

Mr. Buttimer summarized the themes discussed during the three working sessions of the parliamentary conference. He urged delegates to take back lessons learned during the parliamentary conference to their individual parliaments and encouraged all

parliamentarians to continue the important work of ensuring accountability from governments. Mr. Creed said that the issues that delegates focused on during the parliamentary conference – peace and security, climate change and migration – can only be addressed through international cooperation. He called on parliamentarians to work together in order to advance comprehensive security in the OSCE region.

THE MEDITERRANEAN FORUM

The Mediterranean Forum opened with remarks by Pascal Allizard (France), OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs. Mr. Allizard's comments focused on several issues facing the Mediterranean region, including migration, climate change and conflict in the Middle East. He said that the conflict in the Middle East threatened regional security and stability. In particular, he commented on recent violence between Israel and Hezbollah and highlighted the urgent humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. He called on the international community to intensify its efforts to avert further escalation and to promote dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

Next to address the Assembly was Ms. Tijana Davidovac, a representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. Ms. Davidovac urged all parties to the conflict in the Middle East to take steps toward peace and dialogue. She further called on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to work toward a two-state solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following this presentation, representatives of two OSCE partners for cooperation – Algeria and Morocco – intervened. The Algerian and Moroccan parliamentary delegations reiterated calls for de-escalation in the Middle East and appealed on all parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians and to respect international law. While invited, the Assembly was informed that the Israeli delegation was unable to participate in the Mediterranean Forum due to the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah.

The Assembly then heard from a delegate of the Palestinian National Council, who discussed the humanitarian emergency in the Gaza Strip and called for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. He also spoke about violence in the West Bank. The delegate said that the OSCE should take steps to include the Palestinian Authority in its partners for dialogue and Mediterranean Forum discussions.

In the open debate, more than 35 delegates took the floor to speak about the situation in the Middle East. Among other issues, delegates discussed the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, instability in the West Bank, recent violence between Israel and Hezbollah, as well as conflict and tensions between Israel and Iran.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

A. BILATERAL MEETING WITH THE UKRAINIAN DELEGATION

On 3 October 2024, the Canadian delegation had a bilateral meeting with six Ukrainian parliamentarians on the sidelines of the Autumn Meeting. Among other issues, the two delegations discussed the threat posed by Russian disinformation, anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine, the military situation in Ukraine, and Canada-Ukraine people-to-people ties.

B. SIDE EVENT ON EFFECTIVE WATER MANAGEMENT

On 3 October 2024, Canadian delegates participated in a side event organized by the German delegation to the OSCE PA entitled *Let's talk about water – Best practices in times of climate change*. The event explored how integrated water management, disaster prevention, and sustainable practices can promote stability, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.
Director, Canadian Delegation to the OSCE PA

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
ACTIVITY	22 nd Autumn Meeting
DESTINATION	Dublin, Ireland
DATES	From October 2 to 4, 2024
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Percy E. Downe Hon. Pierrette Ringuette
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Hedy Fry ¹ Charlie Angus Kristina Michaud
STAFF	Brian Hermon
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 34,681.81
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 8,061.60
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 4,314.47
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 47,057.88

¹Travel cancellation expenses due to unforeseen circumstances.