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Parliamentary Association



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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 27th Annual Session of the
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

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

**Berlin, Germany
7-11 July 2018**

Report

From 7–11 July 2018, a delegation of 10 Canadian parliamentarians attended the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA's) Annual Session in Berlin, Germany. The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. led the delegation, which included – from the Senate – the Honourable Senators Percy Downe, Paul McIntyre and Kim Pate, and – from the House of Commons – the Honourable Thomas Mulcair, P.C., M.P., Mr. John Aldag, M.P., Mr. Dean Allison, M.P., Ms. Pam Damoff, M.P., Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P. and Mr. Francesco Sorbara, M.P. Ms. Katherine Simonds, Advisor, and Ms. Josée Thérien, Association Secretary, accompanied the delegation.

2018 Annual Session¹

Nearly 300 parliamentarians from across the OSCE region, together with representatives of the “Partners for Cooperation”² states, met in Berlin, Germany for the OSCE PA's 2018 Annual Session.

Throughout the Annual Session, the discussions were guided by the theme “Implementing OSCE Commitments: The Role of Parliamentarians.” The agenda included meetings of the Standing Committee and each of the three General Committees, three plenary sessions and several side events. A meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, a working lunch on gender issues and a meeting of the Bureau were also held. During the closing plenary session, which was held on the final day of the Annual Session, the Berlin Declaration was adopted. The declaration contains recommendations designed to influence the OSCE and national policies in the fields of political-military affairs, economics and the environment, and human rights. Elections for several OSCE PA officer positions, including the President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer, as well as for committee officers, also took place.

A. Standing Committee

The Standing Committee³ met on 7 July 2018 and heard reports from OSCE PA officials, including the Treasurer, Ms. Doris Barnett (Germany), who provided financial information. Ms. Barnett explained that the OSCE PA's financial situation remains strong, and that the proposed budget for 2018–2019 of €3,456,500 is a 7.14% increase over the 2017–2018 budget. This increase will help to fund additional Junior Professional Officer positions to engage young professionals in the OSCE PA, provide assistance to recently created ad hoc committees, support the activities of the President, and comply with new staff regulations and rules. The Standing Committee unanimously approved the budget for the 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019 financial year. Secretary General Roberto Montella

¹ Reports presented at the Annual Session, and videos of the sessions, are available on the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's [OSCE PA's] [website](#).

² OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation include: Algeria; Egypt; Israel; Jordan; Morocco; and Tunisia. OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation include: Japan; South Korea; Thailand; and Afghanistan. See OSCE "[Partners for Co-operation](#).”

³ The Standing Committee of the OSCE PA comprises the Heads of National Delegations and members of the Bureau.

(Italy) then outlined his activities during the year and his future priorities.⁴ A proposed amendment to the OSCE PA's Rules of Procedure to grant observer status to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was adopted.

The heads of election observation missions, Special Representatives and chairs of ad hoc committees provided reports on their work. Ms. Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden) commented on the limited election observation mission to the parliamentary elections in Italy, Mr. Michael Georg Link (Germany) spoke about the election observation mission to the 2018 presidential election in Russia, and Ms. Nilza de Sena (Portugal) remarked on the election observation mission to the presidential election in Azerbaijan. As Special Representatives and sub-committee chairs, the following individuals reported on their activities in their particular topic area: Lord Peter Bowness (United Kingdom) on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices; Ms. Nahima Lanjri (Belgium) on the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration; Mr. Makis Vouridis (Greece) on the Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism; Mr. Pascal Allizard (France) on Mediterranean Affairs; Mr. Kent Harstedt (Sweden) on Eastern Europe; and Mr. Christopher Smith (United States) on Human Trafficking.⁵

As well, Mr. George Tsereteli (Georgia), who is the OSCE PA's President, described the priority areas that he has worked on since being elected President. According to his report, these areas have included strengthening the OSCE PA's contributions to conflict resolution efforts, ensuring that the OSCE is equipped to address new challenges and promoting common values. He also outlined activities undertaken throughout his presidency.⁶

The Standing Committee considered 16 supplementary items (SIs) to be added to the Annual Session's agenda; they were approved and placed on the agenda for debate. Future meetings of the OSCE PA were then discussed.

Canadian Participation:

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** represented the Canadian delegation at the Standing Committee meeting.

B. Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration – which serves as a focal point for the OSCE PA's work regarding migration – met on 7 July 2018. Ms. Lanjri, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, presented a report on the Ad Hoc Committee's visit to Serbia, which took place from 10–12 June 2018. She explained that the Ad Hoc Committee met with

⁴ OSCE PA, "[Report of the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Roberto Montella](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 7–11 July 2018.

⁵ OSCE PA, "[Report by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration Nahima Lanjri to the Standing Committee](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 7 July 2018; OSCE PA, "[Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 7 July 2018; OSCE PA, "[Report by the Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance, Benjamin L. Cardin \(United States\)](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 7 July 2018; and OSCE PA, "[Report of the Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues, Christopher Smith \(United States\)](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 7 July 2018.

⁶ OSCE PA, "[Report of the President of the OSCE PA, George Tsereteli](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 7 July 2018.

government representatives to discuss Serbia's migration and asylum policy, and visited a number of facilities hosting unaccompanied minors. The information obtained on this visit will be included in the Ad Hoc Committee's forthcoming report on unaccompanied minors and separated children. Ms. Lanjri encouraged Ad Hoc Committee members to provide input on their countries' best practices and lessons learned in the areas of unaccompanied minors and separated children, as well as measures to promote their integration. It was agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee would conduct more fact-finding missions before finalizing its report by the end of February 2019. The meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was adjourned following a discussion about future business.

Canadian Participation:

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** is a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and attended its meeting. She contributed to the discussion about the future draft report, and outlined several examples of Canada's practices and procedures relating to unaccompanied minors and separated children.

C. Plenary Sessions

Plenary Sessions were held on Sunday, 8 July, Tuesday, 10 July and Wednesday, 11 July.

1. First Plenary Session

The First Plenary Session was held on 8 July 2018. Delegates were welcomed by Mr. Wolfgang Schäuble, President of Germany's Bundestag, President Tsereteli, Mr. Olaf Scholz, Germany's Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister of Finance, and – representing the Italian OSCE Chairmanship – Mr. Guglielmo Picchi, Italy's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation. They addressed the need for stronger political will in ensuring the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE commitments.

In particular, Mr. Schäuble stressed the importance of the OSCE's parliamentary dimension in building mutual trust among participating States. President Tsereteli underscored the relevance of the OSCE's principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes in the modern global security environment. He noted that disregard for these values contributes to increasing tensions in the OSCE region. Mr. Scholz stated that today's multifaceted challenges cannot be addressed by any single state but that effective responses require enhanced levels of cooperation amongst OSCE countries. Mr. Picchi delivered remarks focused on the crisis in and around Ukraine, protracted conflicts, organized crime, and developing partnerships with Mediterranean and Asian Partner States of the OSCE to tackle transnational threats.

An SI on the topic of migration was introduced, debated and adopted. Ms. Lanjri sponsored "Minors on the Move: The Role of the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Building an Effective Protection Framework," which called on OSCE participating States to enhance mechanisms to protect the human rights of all refugee and migrant children, regardless of their status, and to give children's best interests primary consideration at all times.

2. Second Plenary Session

The Second Plenary Session opened with an address by Mr. Ivan Brajovic, Speaker of Montenegro's Parliament. Speaker Brajovic reiterated the role of strong institutions in upholding democratic principles. As Special Representative on Gender Issues, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** then presented both her 2018 Gender Balance Report and an SI on the topic of "Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence," as discussed below. Following debate and voting on amendments, the SI was adopted. General debate then occurred, with delegates addressing a wide range of issues, including the crisis in Ukraine, terrorism, environmental challenges, migration, organized crime and illicit trafficking.

3. Third Plenary Session

General debate continued in the Third Plenary Session, with the interventions focusing on several issues that are significant to the OSCE, including countering violent extremism, human rights in Crimea and combating corruption.

Ms. Barnett addressed delegates, and provided financial information previously presented to the Standing Committee.

Mr. Thomas Greminger, Secretary General of the OSCE, also addressed delegates, and underscored the importance of multilateral dialogue among parliamentarians to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of citizens from across the OSCE region are heard. Among other topics, Mr. Montella then noted the high level of participation in the 2018 Annual Session, particularly by civil society representatives. He also reiterated the comments that he had made at the meeting of the Standing Committee and responded to questions.

Delegates then voted to adopt the Berlin Declaration, comprising the resolutions from the three General Committees and 16 SIs. The Declaration, which urged renewed commitments from OSCE participating States to the OSCE's founding principles, was adopted following the discussion of amendments.

During the Third Plenary Session, election results for the OSCE PA's leadership positions were announced, as discussed below.

Canadian Participation:

All Canadian parliamentarians attended the three Plenary Sessions.

During the First Plenary Session, **Mr. Francesco Sorbara, M.P.** asked Mr. Picchi about the Italian Chairmanship's priorities as they relate to trade agreements. Noting that strong economic ties can lead to higher growth and enhanced security, Mr. Sorbara highlighted that trade is a tool for improved outcomes in both of these areas.

In her role as the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Gender Issues, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** presented her annual report during the Second Plenary Session. With its focus on "Taking Urgent Action in the OSCE Region to End Gender-Based Violence," the report highlighted the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in the OSCE region, and suggested areas in which the OSCE and participating States should

strengthen their efforts to address this challenge. Noting that one in three women has experienced some form of GBV in her lifetime, the report called for improved data collection, stronger mechanisms to respond to workplace harassment and abuse, and the engagement of men and boys in efforts to combat GBV. The report also discussed implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda's commitments designed to ensure the full participation of women in all aspects of the conflict cycle. Specifically, the report identified conflict prevention, sexual violence in conflict and conflict recovery as three areas warranting greater attention by OSCE participating States. It also mentioned the increased vulnerability of migrant woman to GBV, and detailed the lack of progress in increasing gender parity within OSCE institutions, including the OSCE PA.⁷

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** presented an SI on the topic of "Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence." Dr. Fry outlined a number of commitments established by OSCE Ministerial Council decisions regarding violence against women, and explained that – despite these commitments – violence against women persists across the OSCE region. She also emphasized that multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence based on identity factors – such as ethnicity, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression – are intensified by armed conflict. The SI called for the creation of platforms for the exchange of best practices and capacity-building tools to support the increased participation of women in security sector institutions.

Ms. Pam Damoff, M.P. spoke in support of Dr. Fry's gender report. Ms. Damoff focused her remarks on the role that parliamentarians can play in promoting legislation, policies and programs aimed at ending workplace harassment and abuse, engaging men and boys in efforts to combat GBV, and implementing commitments to women, peace and security. She expressed concern about the significant data gaps regarding GBV, and echoed the calls made in Dr. Fry's report for improved data collection.

Ms. Gwen Moore (United States) proposed two amendments to Dr. Fry's SI, which were moved by **Senators Kim Pate and Percy Downe**. Following debate, the SI was adopted as amended.

Senator Percy Downe participated in the question-and-answer session with Mr. Montella during the Third Plenary Session. Senator Downe stressed that, unlike the OSCE's governing bodies and institutions, the OSCE PA is not constrained by consensus-based decision-making; as well, parliamentarians' ability to engage in honest discussions can promote peaceful solutions to difficult problems. He asked Mr. Montella about establishing a procedure that would require the OSCE Secretary General to provide a formal response to the declaration adopted at the OSCE PA's Annual Sessions. According to Senator Downe, such a reporting requirement would provide information about the extent to which the OSCE considers the OSCE PA's policy recommendations and advice, improve the visibility of the OSCE PA's work, and enhance transparency and accountability. In agreeing with Senator Downe's proposal, Mr. Montella indicated that the idea warrants further consideration.

⁷ OSCE PA, "[Taking Urgent Action in the OSCE Region to End Gender-Based Violence](#)," 27th Annual Session of the OSCE PA, Berlin, Germany, 10 July 2018.

D. General Committee Meetings

1. General Committee on Political Affairs and Security (First General Committee)

Chair: Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland)
Vice-Chair: Guglielmo Picchi (Italy)
Rapporteur: Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria)

The First General Committee considered and debated a draft report and a draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur. They focused mainly on protracted conflicts, cybersecurity, Russian aggression against Ukraine and nuclear disarmament. Following the Rapporteur's presentation of the draft report and draft resolution, delegates debated issues raised in these documents. Proposed amendments to the draft resolution were then debated and adopted, and the draft resolution was adopted as amended.

The First General Committee also debated, amended and adopted four SIs proposed by OSCE parliamentarians:

- “Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism” (Greece);
- “Ten Years after the August 2008 War in Georgia” (Georgia);
- “Strengthening the OSCE’s Approach to Supporting Security Sector Governance and Reform in Participating and Partner States” (Switzerland); and
- “Reaffirming the Commitment to and Guarantees of the Effective Operation of the OSCE” (Belgium).

The following individuals were elected as committee officers for 2018–2019:

Chair: Filippo Lombardi (Switzerland)
Vice-Chair: Sofio Katsarava (Georgia)
Rapporteur: Alan Farrell (Ireland).

Canadian Participation:

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., Senator Percy Downe, Senator Kim Pate, Senator Paul McIntyre, Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.** and **Ms. Pam Damoff, M.P.** attended the meetings of the First General Committee. Because meetings of other OSCE PA General Committees were held concurrently, not all delegates were present at all times.

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** sponsored three gender-related amendments to the First General Committee's draft resolution. Her amendments were designed to achieve two goals: ensure that the draft resolution reflected the need to enhance women's empowerment throughout all stages of the conflict cycle; and call on the Ministerial Council to adopt an addendum to the 2004 Gender Action Plan. Dr. Fry also proposed amendments to the SI on “Strengthening the OSCE's Approach to Supporting Security Sector Governance and Reform in Participating and Partner States,” alling on OSCE participating States to prioritize the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Following debate, her amendments were adopted.

Mr. Dean Allison, M.P. spoke about the First General Committee’s draft report, specifically its examination of the OSCE’s efforts to combat terrorism. He noted that the OSCE faces threats on numerous fronts, such as: unresolved conflicts causing regional instability; cyber threats; and violent extremism and radicalization to terrorism. Reiterating the draft report’s calls for enhanced cooperation to address the threat of terrorism, Mr. Allison urged parliamentarians to increase support for relevant international and regional organizations. Moreover, in outlining Canadian efforts to combat terrorism, he explained that Canada has positioned its security sector to address current and emerging threats, while also ensuring alignment with the OSCE’s principles and commitments.

As well, **Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.** intervened during the First General Committee’s meeting to discuss the SI on “Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism.” His remarks centred on efforts to counter terrorist recruitment, mobilization, funding and operational support. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that returning foreign fighters are prevented from resuming their activities. Mr. Allison called on OSCE parliamentarians to remain a driving force for countering terrorism, while safeguarding human rights. He outlined a number of Canadian best practices related to recognizing and resisting extremist “narratives”, and urged OSCE parliamentarians to allocate sufficient resources to support counter-terrorism authorities.

2. General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment (Second General Committee)

Chair: Nilza Sena (Portugal)
Vice-Chair: Artur Gerasymov (Ukraine)
Rapporteur: Sofio Katsarava (Georgia)

The Second General Committee considered and debated a draft report and a draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur. These documents addressed a range of issues, such as combating corruption, the security implications of climate change, the impact of environmental degradation on migration flows, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and cooperation regarding renewable energy. Following the Rapporteur’s presentation of the draft report and draft resolution, delegates debated issues identified in the draft report, proposed and adopted amendments to the draft resolution, and adopted the draft resolution as amended.

In addition, the Second General Committee debated, amended and adopted the following five SIs proposed by OSCE parliamentarians:

- “Promoting Connectivity in the OSCE Area Through Development of Transport Links and Corridors, Including by Revitalizing the Ancient Silk Road” (Azerbaijan);
- “A Shared Priority: Fostering Peace and Security Through Enabling Young People to Reach Their Full Potential” (Malta);
- “Promotion of the Digital Economy in the Interests of Ensuring Economic Growth in the OSCE Area” (Belarus);

- “Connectivity and Alignment of Integration Processes in the OSCE Area” (Russian Federation); and
- “Response to Demographic Challenges in the OSCE Area” (Spain).

The following individuals were elected as committee officers for 2018–2019:

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|-------------|--------------------------------|----|-----------|------------|
| Chair: | Nilza | de | Sena | (Portugal) |
| Vice-Chair: | Artur | | Gerasymov | (Ukraine) |
| Rapporteur: | Elona Gjebrea Hoxha (Albania). | | | |

Canadian Participation:

Senator Paul McIntyre, the Honourable Thomas Mulcair, P.C., M.P., Mr. John Aldag, M.P., Mr. Dean Allison, M.P., Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P. and Mr. Francesco Sorbara, M.P. attended the meetings of the Second General Committee. Because meetings of other OSCE PA General Committees were held concurrently, not all delegates were present at all times.

Mr. John Aldag, M.P.’s comments about the Second General Committee’s draft report focused on the risks that climate change and other environmental challenges pose to security. Highlighting the nexus among migration, climate change and security, Mr. Aldag explained that the scarcity of water, rising sea levels, heat waves, and the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters are contributing to a growing number of non-viable areas in some countries. He called for a holistic approach to curbing climate-driven migration, including through the implementation of policies focused on emissions reductions, resilience-building, human security and economic development.

As well, **Mr. John Aldag, M.P.**’s proposed two amendments to the Second General Committee’s draft resolution. His first amendment proposed the addition of a paragraph centred on the use of carbon pricing as a tool both to combat climate change and to encourage the private sector and individuals to change their investment, production and consumption patterns. His second proposed amendment urged the OSCE and the OSCE PA to establish forums for the exchange of best practices related to carbon pricing. Following debate, both proposed amendments were adopted.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P. spoke against Mr. Aldag’s first proposed amendment. He noted that Canada’s support for carbon pricing was based on the understanding that a common North American plan would have been implemented. He stated that some countries – such as Australia – have moved away from a carbon tax, and that the idea of carbon pricing had lost favour among Canadians due to such factors as trade uncertainties, pipeline delays and the United States’ low-tax policies. Mr. Dreeshen suggested that the OSCE PA should focus its efforts on sharing best practices related to various carbon pricing mechanisms.

Mr. Dean Allison, M.P. spoke about the Second General Committee’s draft report, and highlighted corruption as both one of the greatest challenges to the legitimacy of democratic institutions and a menace that hinders progress in many OSCE participating States. Noting the important role played by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, Mr. Allison detailed recent initiatives aimed at combating corruption, including a training course on the evaluation of draft laws in

Kazakhstan. He underscored the role of parliamentarians in increasing transparency and accessibility in order both to contribute to good governance and to curtail transnational organized crime, money laundering and terrorist financing. He urged parliamentarians to cooperate in tackling these issues in a non-partisan manner.

In speaking about the Second General Committee's draft report, **Mr. Francesco Sorbara, M.P.** drew attention to its focus on migration and internal displacement. He reiterated that economic migration has made a significant contribution to irregular migration flows to Europe, and underscored that youth deserve particular attention in this regard. Mr. Sorbara noted that, in many parts of the world, youth do not have sufficient access to employment opportunities, which undermines their ability to achieve their goals and contribute to their communities. Mr. Sorbara called for greater data collection regarding youth unemployment and underemployment, and suggested that OSCE participating States should prioritize skills development, entrepreneurship and access to financing when developing policies related to youth employment creation.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara, M.P. also intervened to discuss two SIs being debated by the Second General Committee. In speaking to "Promotion of the Digital Economy in the Interests of Ensuring Economic Growth in the OSCE Area," he indicated that many see the digital economy as an integral contributor to economic growth, particularly since digital platforms can lead to improved connectivity between and among citizens, businesses, legislators, the media, and civil society and other groups. As well, Mr. Sorbara stressed that journalists must be able to use digital platforms in an uncensored and responsible way, and that protecting personal information must be a priority. When addressing "Response to Demographic Challenges in the OSCE Area," he outlined challenges associated with rapidly aging populations, declining birth rates and shrinking labour forces that affect OSCE participating States. Mr. Sorbara outlined a range of policy implications, including an increased demand for seniors-related programming and social infrastructure. He urged OSCE participating States to implement measures designed to reduce the impacts of demographic challenges.

3. General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions (Third General Committee)

Chair: Ignacio Sanchez Amour (Spain)
Vice-Chair: Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic)
Rapporteur: Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjjiyanni (Cyprus)

The Third General Committee considered and debated a draft report and a draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur. The draft report mainly focused on protecting the human dimension of security amidst rising instability in the OSCE region stemming from disinformation and influence campaigns, protracted conflicts, climate change and violent extremism. It also addressed political prisoners and the rights of journalists.

The draft report called on OSCE participating States to reverse the trend of declining respect for human rights in the OSCE region that has occurred in recent years. The Rapporteur expressed concern about the extent to which OSCE participating States increasingly limit the ability of their citizens to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and urged Turkey to end its state of emergency. As well, the draft

report addressed the abolition of the death penalty, the rights of refugees and migrants, and human trafficking. The Rapporteur also discussed the issue of rising nationalism and populism in the OSCE region, and referenced the significant role that the OSCE can play in furthering democratization efforts. Proposed amendments to the draft resolution were then debated and adopted, and the draft resolution was adopted as amended.

In addition, the Third General Committee debated, amended and adopted the following four SIs proposed by OSCE parliamentarians:

- “Implementing Trafficking-free Communities” (United States);
- “Countering Propaganda for Hatred and War in the OSCE Area” (Lithuania);
- “Violations of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Russian Federation” (Sweden); and
- “Ongoing Violations of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol” (Ukraine).

The following committee officers were elected for 2018–2019:

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|-------------|---|--------|--------|---------------|
| Chair: | Margareta | Kiener | Nellen | (Switzerland) |
| Vice-Chair: | Michael | Georg | Link | (Germany) |
| Rapporteur: | Kyriakos Kyriakou-Hadjjiyanni (Cyprus). | | | |

Canadian Participation:

All members of the Canadian delegation attended the meetings of the Third General Committee, and voted on both the proposed amendments to the draft resolution prepared by the Rapporteur and the SIs. Because General Committee meetings were held concurrently, not all delegates were present at all times.

In the context of the Third General Committee’s draft report, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** focused her remarks on the issue of protecting democracy in the age of “fake news.” She characterized cyber warfare and propaganda as threats to democracy, and noted that many countries in the OSCE region have struggled to respond to the challenges of “fake news.” Dr. Fry called on parliamentarians to be vigilant in protecting the foundations of democracy, and said that an informed populace is essential to combating disinformation campaigns. She mentioned that, in Canada, a 2017 report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Heritage found that news aggregation can conflate verifiable news sources with “citizen journalism.” She urged OSCE participating States to promote educational tools aimed at helping citizens to improve online literacy with the objective of increasing their resistance to hacking and other cyber threats.

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** also proposed three amendments to the Third General Committee’s draft resolution. Her first proposed amendment was designed to strengthen the draft resolution’s language related to gender by specifically referring to issues addressed by key Ministerial Council decisions. Her second proposed amendment focused on combating “fake news,” with a proposal to add references to the need to promote high-quality journalism. Her third proposed amendment encouraged OSCE

participating States to develop educational tools in conjunction with civil society groups, the private sector and relevant OSCE institutions with the aim of increasing resistance to the spread of propaganda. Following debate, these proposed amendments were adopted.

As well, the **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** spoke about “Violations of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Russian Federation,” expressing concern about reports of persecution, torture and disappearances of LGBTQ2 people in Chechnya, and the ongoing repression of the Russian LGBTQ2 community generally. She reiterated the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs’ condemnation of reports of persecution of gay and bisexual men in Chechnya, and called on Russia to end these discriminatory practices.

In his remarks about the Third General Committee’s draft report, **Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.** focused on respect for the right to freedom of religion. He stressed that the free exercise of religion or belief is an inalienable right, but also noted that religious discrimination and undue state-imposed restrictions on religious practice continue unabated. Mr. Allison reaffirmed respect for human rights as a central tenet of the OSCE, and urged OSCE participating States to combat xenophobia, radical nationalism and religious extremism.

Mr. Allison also spoke in support of “Implementing Trafficking Free Communities.” He expressed alarm that 25 million people worldwide are currently being exploited by human trafficking, and mentioned that all countries in the OSCE region are affected as either countries of origin, transit or destination. He highlighted several of the SI’s strategies to prevent and reduce demand for human trafficking, including the development of multi-sectoral partnerships.

Senator Kim Pate proposed an amendment to the Third General Committee’s draft resolution, specifically to include a reference to “sex trafficking” in a paragraph related to human trafficking. In urging OSCE parliamentarians to emphasize sex trafficking in the draft resolution, she explained that, as of 2016, an estimated 4.8 million people – almost exclusively women – were victims of forced sexual exploitation, or sex trafficking. The proposed amendment was adopted without contest.

E. Elections

During the Third Plenary Session, incumbent President Tsereteli and incumbent Treasurer Barnett were re-elected by acclamation. Election results were also announced for four Vice-President positions: Lord Bowness (United Kingdom); Kari Henriksen (Norway); Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria); and Pascal Allizard (France).

F. Additional Activities of the Canadian Delegation

The **Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.** and Ms. Barnett, Head of the German Delegation, co-hosted the OSCE PA’s annual gender working lunch. In 2018, the gender working lunch focused on “Combating Violence Against Women.” In her introductory remarks, Dr. Fry commended the OSCE for its work in helping to prevent and combat violence against women, but noted that much more remains to be done. Ms. Barnett introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Franziska Giffey, Germany’s Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Dr. Giffey's address focused on practical efforts to combat violence against women. She mentioned several German initiatives in this regard, including a support network and telephone helpline, awareness-raising campaigns and legislation. Dr. Giffey reiterated the need to close the gender equality gap by using such initiatives as the Istanbul Convention to enhance cooperation among OSCE participating States.

Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, then addressed the luncheon. She discussed emerging forms of violence against women, recalled the role of relevant OSCE structures and instruments, and underscored the persistent data gap relating to violence against women.

President Tsereteli also addressed the luncheon, and highlighted the role that the OSCE PA can play in promoting information-sharing among governments.

Dr. Fry then moderated a discussion among the delegates that was focused on the following question: "What concrete steps can be taken by parliamentarians to eradicate gender-based violence in all its forms, including domestic and sexual violence, workplace harassment, human trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation during conflict, and early and forced marriage?"

Members of the Canadian delegation attended the gender working lunch, as well as side events hosted by:

- the U.S. delegation: the assassination of Boris Nemtsov;
- the Lithuanian delegation: addressing propaganda and disinformation;
- the Finnish delegation: the cost of reliable, independent and high-quality journalism;
- the German delegation: structured dialogue on security challenges within the OSCE region; and
- the Georgian delegation and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: the role of parliaments in scrutiny and oversight in the OSCE regional context.

One side meeting was held between members of the Canadian delegation and Transparency International to discuss the issue of combating corruption.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable 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

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| ASSOCIATION | Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly |
| ACTIVITY | 27th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly |
| DESTINATION | Berlin, Germany |
| DATES | 7-11 July 2018 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | Hon. Percy Downe, Senator Hon. Paul McIntyre, Senator Hon. Kim Pate, Senator |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. Hon. Thomas Mulcair, P.C., M.P. John Aldag, M.P. Dean Allison, M.P. Pam Damoff, M.P. Earl Dreeshen, M.P. Francesco Sorbara, M.P. |
| STAFF | Josée Thérien, Association Secretary Katherine Simonds, Advisor |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$ 60,725.22 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$ 13,026.13 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$ 140.10 |
| PER DIEMS | \$ 12,768.70 |
| OFFICIAL GIFTS | \$ 0 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | \$ 0 |
| TOTAL | \$ 86,660.15 |