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Report of the Canadian Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

18th Autumn Meeting

Marrakesh, Morocco

From October 4 to 6, 2019

Report

From 4 to 6 October 2019, a delegation of three Canadian parliamentarians attended the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA) Autumn Meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco. The **Honourable Senator Percy Downe** led the delegation, which included the **Honourable Senator Pierrette Ringuette**, and the **Honourable Senator Leo Housakos**. The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Jessica Kulka, Delegation Secretary.

2019 OSCE PA Autumn Meeting

Over three days, parliamentarians from across the OSCE area, together with representatives of the "Partners for Cooperation" states met in Marrakesh, Morocco, for the 2019 Autumn Meeting. This was the first time that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting was hosted by a Mediterranean Partner for Co-operation, and the first time an OSCE PA meeting was held in Africa.

The program began with a meeting of the Mediterranean Forum which debates specific issues affecting the Mediterranean region and includes an opportunity for the Heads of the Parliamentary Delegations from the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia) and the Palestinian Legislative Council to address the OSCE PA. This forum was followed by the Parliamentary Conference on "Promoting Security Across the Euro-Mediterranean Region: The Role of the OSCE and its Partners." In addition to its opening and closing sessions the conference included sessions on: The OSCE and the African Regional Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices; The Euro-Mediterranean Region and the Challenges Posed by Climate Change: Economic Development and Environmental Migration; and Combating Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

In addition to the meetings listed above, the Head of the Canadian Delegation, **Senator Downe**, attended both a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration as well as a meeting of the OSCE PA Standing Committee.

A. Mediterranean Forum

The Mediterranean Forum addressed the promotion of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region. The forum was opened by Mr. Pascal Allizard (France), OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs who introduced this meeting's theme: North-South Cooperation Models and Economic Connectivity of the Mediterranean Region in a Globalized World. Mr. Allizard spoke of the implications of the emergence of China as a new player in the Mediterranean and then introduced H.E. George Tsereteli, President of the OSCE PA who delivered the welcoming remarks.

H.E. Mr. Mavroudis Vouridis, Greek Minister of Rural Development and Food, presented first. In his address Mr. Vouridis spoke of the unique potential of the OSCE PA. He explained that the diversity and number of assembled parliamentarians creates opportunities for international cooperation on global challenges such as climate change, corruption, terrorism and economic growth. Efficient policies, he noted, are needed to combat these challenges, and this can be achieved when parliamentarians return to their countries and promote legislation that supports the resolutions agreed to by the members

of this assembly. This, he stated, is the importance of the OSCE PA, it brings together parliamentarians to push legislation in a specific direction. In his conclusion Mr. Vوريدis expressed his hope that the OSCE PA will add food security to its list of security considerations.

Next H.E. Ambassador Igli Hasani, Chairman of the OSCE Contact Group with the Mediterranean partners for Co-Operation and Permanent Representative of Albania to the OSCE spoke of the importance of cooperation with Mediterranean partners. He stated that there is no security in the Mediterranean if there is no security in Europe and there is no security in Europe if there is no security in the Mediterranean. He outlined economic connectivity in the Mediterranean contact group and support for youth as means of promoting peace and security within the Mediterranean area. He also touched on the importance of empowering women.

This was followed by addresses by the Heads of the parliamentary Delegations from the OSCE Mediterranean partners for Co-operation (in alphabetical order: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia) and the Palestinian Legislative Council. The forum concluded with open debate from all delegates.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

This session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

Senator Downe made an intervention during the open debate. He spoke of money laundering, which continues to be a significant issue in the OSCE and Mediterranean regions. He also expressed that he regretted that Dr. Fry could not attend this session in her capacity as the Special Representative on Gender. **Senator Downe** then stressed the importance of women speakers and noted that it is a shame that the panel for the forum only included one female. He's disappointment in the lack of women representatives was echoed in interventions from Sweden and the Netherlands, which followed.

B. Parliamentary Conference on “Promoting Security Across the Euro-Mediterranean Region. The Role of the OSCE and its Partners”

Following an inaugural session opened by H.E. Mr. George Tsereteli, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, with remarks from H.E. Mr. Hakim Benchmach, President of the House Councillors of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Mr. Khalid Samadi, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Mr. Alassane Bala Sakande, President of the African Parliamentary Union and Speaker of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, and H.E. Mr. Moustapha Cisse Lo, Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the conference sessions began.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

The Opening Session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

Session 1: The OSCE and the African Regional Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practice

The first session was chaired by Mr. Roger Wicker, OSCE PA Vice-President (USA).

President of the Guelmim-Oued Noun Region, Ms. Mbarka Bouaida, presented. Ms. Bouaida spoke of the political crisis and political gap that exists between political discourse and what citizens want to hear. She advocated for more decentralization of power to the marginalized parts of the world. She also stressed the need for more women's participation in local and regional management. She noted that this is a particular challenge for all as women's participation is low.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

This session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

Session 2: The Euro-Mediterranean Region and the Challenges Posed by Climate Change: Economic Development and Environmental Migration

The second session was chaired by Ms. Nilza de Sena, OSCE PA Vice-President (Portugal).

H.E. Mr. Moustapha Cisse Lo, Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament delivered an address in which he explained that the Mediterranean is a region largely affected by climate change. He explained that the geography and environment of this region make it a hot spot. The destructive activities by man, urbanization and trade are putting unbearable pressure on the land, seas, and natural resources and the consequences are already visible. One of the first effects is the reduction of rainfall, more drought, and scarcity in water resources. The area is experiencing more heat waves, an increase in pathogens that cause diseases, destruction of the marine environment and of the forests. All of these in turn affect the population and are drivers in the phenomenon of migration. Mr. Cisse Lo expressed the need to develop regional cooperation between scientists and policy makers. He urged the international community, which he noted is often passive in this challenge, to pool its efforts to face this urgent call to action. He explained that the forums and treaties have not made a dent in addressing the problem. He urged governments to take this seriously by considering the consequences, adjusting their budgets, and involving the next generation.

Next Ms. Teresa Botella, Deputy Chief of the Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Morocco delivered a presentation entitled *The Euro-Mediterranean Region and the Challenges Posed by Climate Change: Environmental Migration*. Ms. Botella explained that there is a link between migration, the environment and climate change. She then noted that there are different types of migrants: permanent, temporary, those displaced within their country, and those displaced to other countries. When talking about solutions Ms. Botella highlighted the need for solutions on three fronts: solutions to enable people to stay, solutions to assist people on the move, and solutions to enable people to move.

The final speaker of the second session was Mr. Ralf Ernst, Deputy Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and Head of Environmental Activities. Mr. Ernst gave a presentation on the OSCE's approach to climate change and security challenges. He introduced climate change as a threat multiplier. Climate change, he explained, does not necessarily create new threats, but it exasperates existing threats such as water security, extreme weather events, competition for natural resources, disruption of food

production and impacts on energy security. Mr. Ernst introduced the program Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, which is implemented through the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative. He listed the outcomes of the program as including training, public outreach and a transboundary adaptation strategy. He then noted that a follow up project is now underway to foster co-operation responses to climate change related security threats as is a collaboration between the OSCE and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to increase development and regional stability in the Mediterranean by addressing security implications in climate change. Mr. Ernst concluded by detailing how cooperation between the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly can be enhanced. His key examples of cooperation were the sharing of information between the OSCE and parliaments and national parliaments including climate change and security in legislation, national strategies, and investment proposals.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

This session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

Session 3: Combatting Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

The third session was moderated by Ms. Kari Henriksen, OSCE PA Vice-President (Norway) and began with a presentation by Mr. Mohamed Belkebir, Director of the Study and Research Center on Values at the Mohammedia League of the Moroccan Ulama. Mr. Belkebir introduced interfaith dialogue as positive and constructive relations with people from other faith groups. It is a willingness to enter into dialogue and learn from those with other beliefs. He gave an account of the Moroccan attitude towards open religious dialogue, which has a perception that faith dialogue does not need to focus on religion and can instead put the emphasis on other values such as morals. Mr. Belkebir listed the objectives of interfaith dialogue as: the reduction of destructive behaviour, the promotion of peace, love, and fraternity, and going beyond observing. He explained that to counter terrorism rooted in misunderstandings of religious belief there is a need to get away from narrow religious focus and to interpret religious text from a scientific and interdisciplinary point of view.

The final presentation of the assembly's sessions was delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mehmet Paçacı, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combatting Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Ambassador Paçacı presented the two crucial elements for combatting discrimination and intolerance against Muslims. The first, he explained is the secure basis of democratic institutions on human rights, which grants the ability to label discrimination against Muslims as a hate crime. The second, he stated is the monitoring and reporting of hate crimes that are otherwise not recognized as such.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

This session was attended by all members of the Canadian delegation.

C. Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration

Senator Downe filled in for the Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. as the Canadian representative on the Ad Hoc Committee of Migration. The Ad Hoc Committee serves as a focal point for the OSCE PA's work in the field of migration from the politico-military,

economic and environmental, and the human dimension. It also develops policy recommendations aimed at improving the treatment of and prospects for migrants in OSCE participating States. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee listened to two presentations on Migration Policy in Morocco: from a country of origin to a country of transit and destination. The Committee also reviewed current developments, upcoming activities and the plans for its next meeting.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

During the review of the upcoming activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration **Senator Downe** reviewed three different scheduling options that could be offered during the Committee's visit to Canada for the 29th Annual Session to be held in July 2020 in Vancouver. He also advised against visiting a Quebec boarder crossing, which had previously been considered, due to the fact that the significant decrease in the traffic at this boarder and the distance to the site from Vancouver would not make the exercise worthwhile.

D. Meeting of the OSCE PA Standing Committee

The OSCE PA Standing Committee began with a report of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. George Tsereteli. This was followed by a review of current international political issues as well as reports from: the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Rules and Procedure, Lord Peter Bowness; the Treasurer of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Peter Juel-Jensen; and the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Roberto Montella.

During the discussion that followed the report from Mr. Montella, Norway intervened and made reference to the work of Dr. Fry while highlighting the need for more female panelists. Norway explained that the need for gender balance is not just about numbers, but also the way in which women are represented. Mr. Montella and Mr. Tsereteli responded by explaining what is already being done to counter the issue, but also accepted that they need to do better on this front.

The reports and information on activities of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly were presented next and included: reports on election observation activities, reports on the activities of the Ad Hoc Committees, and reports on the activities of the special representatives. The meeting ended with a review of future meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

Senator Downe represented Canada at this meeting as the Head of the Canadian delegation. When future meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly were discussed, he invited all members of the OSCE to Vancouver for the Canada for the 29th Annual Session to be held in July 2020. He also emphasized the importance of gender parity to Canada and the need to ensure this is reflected in this rendition of the Annual Session.

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

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
ACTIVITY	18 th Autumn Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
DESTINATION	Marrakesh, Morocco
DATES	From October 4 to 6, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Percy Downe Hon. Leo Housakos Hon. Pierrette Ringuette
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Ms. Jessica Kulka
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 27,075.28
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 5,460.26
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 2,259.00
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 34,794.54