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Parliamentary Association



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OSCEPA

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Report of the Canadian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

21st Winter Meeting

By Videoconference

From February 24-25, 2022

REPORT

On 24 and 25 February 2022, a delegation of 10 Canadian parliamentarians remotely attended the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA) 21st Winter Meeting, which was held in a hybrid format. The delegation comprised:

- The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P., head of the delegation;
- The Honourable Senator Pierre J. Dalphond;
- The Honourable Senator Lucie Moncion;
- The Honourable Senator Vernon White;
- Mr. Ziad Aboultaif, M.P.;
- Ms. Yvonne Jones, M.P.;
- Ms. Heather McPherson, M.P.;
- Ms. Kristina Michaud, M.P.;
- Ms. Ya'ara Saks, M.P.; and
- Mr. Bob Zimmer, M.P.

The delegation was assisted by Brian Hermon, Robert Mason, Laura Munn-Rivard and Anne-Marie Therrien-Tremblay, Advisors with the Library of Parliament, and Matthieu Boulianne, the Association's Secretary.

2022 OSCE PA WINTER MEETING

The OSCE PA's 21st Winter Meeting brought together parliamentarians from across the OSCE region in a hybrid format. The Winter Meeting included a session of the Standing Committee, as well as a joint session and individual sessions of the three General Committees: Political Affairs and Security; Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment; and Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions. These sessions are summarized below.

STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee, which comprises the OSCE PA's heads of delegation and members of the Bureau, met on the mornings of 24 and 25 February 2022. The meeting of 24 February 2022 took place only hours after Russia had launched a large-scale military invasion of Ukraine. Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, President of the OSCE PA, began the meeting by proposing a minute of silence to honour the victims of the war and all of those affected by Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Mr. Roberto Montella, Secretary General of the OSCE PA, spoke next and requested that the Standing Committee's

agenda be modified to allow for immediate debate following the address by Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General of the OSCE. That request was approved.

Secretary General Schmid condemned Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, which she said ran counter to Russia's United Nations (UN) obligations and OSCE commitments. Secretary General Schmid said that her immediate priorities were ensuring the safety and security of OSCE personnel in Ukraine and supporting international efforts to achieve peace and provide humanitarian assistance. Following Secretary General Schmid's comments, more than 30 OSCE PA heads of delegation took the floor to address the situation in Ukraine and other regional security matters.

On 25 February 2022, members of the Standing Committee agreed to a modified agenda that included time for debate. President Margareta Cederfelt briefly outlined the recent work of the OSCE PA in the context of the situation in Ukraine and encouraged members of the Standing Committee to read her report.¹ This was followed by the delivery of two reports: the first by the Treasurer of the OSCE PA, Mr. Peter Juel-Jensen, and the second by the Secretary General Roberto Montella. In addition, chairs of the Ad Hoc Committees and some OSCE PA Special Representatives – including Dr. Fry, M.P., Special Representative on Gender Issues – delivered presentations about their work.² When reporting on their activities, several members of the Standing Committee also addressed the situation in Ukraine. Mr. Mykyta Poturaiev, Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA, then took the floor. Mr. Poturaiev described the situation in Ukraine, which included large-scale military operations in its biggest cities, and called on the delegates to demand action from their governments in support of Ukraine.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

As Head of Delegation, **Dr. Fry, M.P.**, addressed the Standing Committee during the open debate on 24 February 2022. Dr. Fry expressed solidarity with Ukrainians as well as support for those in Russia who opposed President Putin's decision to invade Ukraine. She further noted that Canada would impose sanctions on Russia and would support Ukrainian refugees and the people of Ukraine with humanitarian assistance.

On 25 February 2022, during the second half of the Standing Committee, **Dr. Fry, M.P.**, presented her ideas for the 2022 Gender Report to be debated at the OSCE PA's 2022 Annual Session. She noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a unique impact on women's economic well-being. She further acknowledged that women are disproportionately affected by crises, from health emergencies – such as the COVID-19 pandemic – to armed conflicts and wars – such as the situation in Ukraine.

JOINT SESSION OF THE THREE GENERAL COMMITTEES

President Margareta Cederfelt opened the Joint Session of the three General Committees, held on 24 February 2022, by stating that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a

¹ See: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), [Report of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Margareta Cederfelt](#), Reporting Period: 1 November 2021 – 15 February 2022.

² For access to selected reports and remarks presented at the 21st Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA see: OSCE PA, [Winter Meeting, Vienna, February 2022](#).

clear violation of international law. She expressed alarm that years of careful diplomacy were abandoned by Russia and that the principles of the Helsinki Final Act were contravened. She said that, as parliamentarians, delegates must all pressure their governments to condemn Russia's attack and support efforts towards peace. As well, she acknowledged that the overwhelming majority of OSCE PA participating States (apart from Russia and Belarus) had denounced Russia's actions. Following President Cederfelt's comments, the President of the Austrian National Council, Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, delivered remarks condemning Russia's attack on Ukraine.

Mr. Mykyta Poturaiev, the Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA, was the next to speak. He outlined the grave situation in Ukraine that morning, explaining that Russia was attacking Ukraine, firing missiles at Ukrainian cities and killing Ukrainian soldiers and civilians. He called on fellow delegates to demand action from their governments in support of Ukraine, warning that the fall of Ukraine would engender a crisis for European security, as Russia could advance on other countries. Lastly, he said that Ukrainian men and women were armed and ready to fight Russia "until the last bullet or last grenade."

Mr. Zbigniew Rau, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Foreign Affairs Minister of Poland, then made remarks, in which he condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and said that all nations have a right to exist in peace and security.

These presentations were followed by an open debate on the subject of "Security Guarantees and the Indivisibility of Security in Europe: The Role of the OSCE."

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

The Joint Session of the three General Committees was attended by **Dr. Fry, M.P., Senator Dalphond, Senator Moncion, Ms. Saks, M.P., Ms. Michaud, M.P., and Mr. Zimmer, M.P.**

Mr. Zimmer, M.P., condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and said that Canada supported Ukraine as the country faced a frightening and uncertain future. He also expressed concern about the implications of Russia's actions for security conditions in the Arctic. Finally, he echoed former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent denunciation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, stating "you are a bully and must be dealt with like all bullies; with resolute unity and force."

GENERAL COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND SECURITY

The General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, held on 24 February 2022, was opened by the Chair, Mr. Richard Hudson (United States), who reminded delegates that they are the collective guardians of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. He expressed alarm that the fundamental values underpinning the security order – including respect of territorial integrity, sovereignty and choice of security alliances – were being breached by one OSCE participating State (Russia) against another participating State (Ukraine).

This was followed by a presentation by Ambassador Rovshan Sadigbayli, Chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the OSCE. Mr. Sadigbayli outlined his priorities as Chair of the Forum, which include

upholding international humanitarian law, taking measures to deal with small arms and the light weapons trade, and developing counter-terrorism initiatives.

Next, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, delivered a presentation to the committee. He outlined his central goal, which is to ensure the OSCE is attentive to early warning signs and takes action to prevent ethnic tensions from developing into full blown conflict. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Laurynas Kasciunas (Lithuania), Rapporteur of the Committee. He expressed his support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and spoke of his alarm about Russia's attack which he said runs counter to all of the OSCE's principles.

In her presentation, Ambassador Jocelyn Kinnear, Chair of the Security Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Canada to the OSCE, expressed concern at Russia's invasion of Ukraine and called on the OSCE PA to remain a forum for substantive conversation to deal with security issues. While she outlined her upcoming priorities as Chair – including efforts to address cybersecurity concerns, to improve counter-terrorism initiatives, and to reduce transnational crime – she acknowledged that Russia's invasion of Ukraine will significantly impact the work of the OSCE.

The presentations were followed by an open debate.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

The General Committee on Political Affairs and Security was attended by **Dr. Fry, M.P., Senator Dalphond, Senator Moncion, Mr. Aboultaif, M.P., Ms. Michaud, M.P., Ms. Saks, M.P.** and **Mr. Zimmer, M.P.**

Dr. Fry, M.P., expressed alarm at Russia's invasion of Ukraine and asked the members and participants of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security to share their thoughts on the possible security threat that Russia presents in the Arctic. She noted that many OSCE PA participating States are also Arctic states and called on parliamentarians to consider the risk that Russia could pose to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these countries.

Ms. Saks, M.P., referred to Russia's attack on Ukraine as a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and a violation of international law. She explained that this attack threatens democracy and the rule of law globally, values which are the foundation of stable societies. As a Jewish person and a descendent of Holocaust survivors, Ms. Saks said that she was shocked by Russia's assertion that its actions were in the name of the "de-Nazification" of Ukraine; she argued that this justification is "revisionism" and a "distortion of history." Ms. Saks stated that Canada would respond to Russia's action by working in concert with its partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the G7. In conclusion, she urged members of the OSCE PA to work together to address the root causes of disinformation and to stem hate speech, particularly in digital spaces.

GENERAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

The General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, held on 25 February, was opened by the Chair, Mr. Pere Joan Pons (Spain). In his remarks, Mr. Pons condemned the invasion of Ukraine and expressed solidarity with its people. He also discussed the need to invest in a green recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, and highlighted the nexus between public health, climate change and security.

Following these remarks, a presentation was delivered by Ms. Gudrun Kugler (Austria), Rapporteur of the Committee, outlining her plans for her report to the 29th Annual Session in July 2022. She indicated that her areas of focus would include the economic consequences of the pandemic, sustainable development, corruption and good governance, and migration. She stressed that it is important to continue working on these topics even in the context of a war in Europe, as they help protect against broader destabilization and are vital to sustainable development now and in the future.

The next presentation was by Ambassador Igli Hasani, Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Ambassador Hasani provided an update on some of the OSCE's areas of engagement relating to the promotion of sustainable economic growth and conflict prevention. He highlighted the similarities between the challenges of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the need for all stakeholders to work together and increase cooperative approaches.

Next, Katarzyna Wisniewska-Rosik, Head of the Second Dimension Unit for the 2022 OSCE Polish Chairmanship, informed the Committee about the activities and goals of the Chairmanship for the year. These include promoting security and stability through the pursuit of a sustainable and inclusive recovery, which she noted can only be achieved through close cooperation and dialogue.

Finally, a special debate on the subject of "Human Trafficking in a Globalized Economy" was initiated with presentations by Mr. Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and Mr. Chris Smith (United States), OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues. Mr. Richey spoke about various legal approaches aimed at combatting human trafficking, including import bans, reporting laws and due diligence laws. Mr. Smith spoke about his experience developing this type of legislation in the United States.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

The General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment was attended by **Dr. Fry, M.P., Senator Moncion, Ms. Jones, M.P., Ms. Michaud, M.P., Ms. Saks, M.P., and Mr. Zimmer, M.P.**

Ms. Saks, M.P., discussed global environmental and economic security in the context of the intersecting crises of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that 2021 was the fifth warmest year on record globally, and that, in British Columbia, heat waves, wildfires, heavy rains and flooding have had an impact on infrastructure, livelihoods, homes, and food production. She discussed the intersection between COVID-19 and the Sustainable Development Goals and noted that climate change is a crisis multiplier. She also highlighted positive developments from the 2021 UN Climate Change

Conference (COP26), including commitments to cut methane emissions, phase out coal power, and eliminate most fossil fuel subsidies.

Dr. Fry, M.P., spoke about human trafficking as a form of modern slavery and noted that it is a cross border problem. She highlighted examples of exploitative working conditions and provided statistical data on the problem. For example, she observed that an estimated 25 million people globally are victims of modern slavery and that men are often in physically demanding jobs such as fisheries and construction, while women are often trafficked for domestic servitude, where they are exposed to sexual, physical and psychological exploitation and violence. She also spoke about efforts to combat human trafficking through supply chain transparency and due diligence legislation.

GENERAL COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

The General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, held on 25 February 2022, was opened by the Chair, Ms. Sereine Mauborgne (France), who discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global human rights conditions. Ms. Mauborgne also provided an overview of her work in three areas: countering discrimination; addressing structural issues, such as impact of the OSCE consensus rule on human rights engagement; and engaging on specific localized issues, such as the migrant situation on the Belarus-Poland border, NGO treatment in Russia, and the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

The next presentation was by Mr. Johan Büser (Sweden), Rapporteur of the Committee, who provided an overview of his intentions for his report to the 29th Annual Session in July 2022. Areas of focus will include the conflict in Ukraine, threats to freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the ways in which it has exposed existing human rights violations and inequalities. He emphasized that widespread discontentment and doubts about democracy must be resolved by building societies that work for everyone, including women and minority groups, and not by restricting basic freedoms.

Following these remarks, Mr. Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, expressed his deep concern about the conflict in Ukraine. He also discussed the work that his office was doing to counter hate crimes, support freedom of peaceful assembly, and address the humanitarian consequences of migration. He further underscored the need for resources to promote democracy and human rights.

Next, Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen (Norway), Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, spoke about the deeply worrying situation in Ukraine, and emphasized that it is precisely in such crises that the human dimension must be discussed, particularly the consequences of conflict on civilians. She noted that the committee's future studies would focus on the rights of women online, the rights of youth, and civil society participation in lawmaking processes.

Teresa Ribeiro (Portugal), Representative on Freedom of the Media, made the final presentation, during which she said that Russia's invasion of Ukraine violated OSCE principles and international law. She noted that the free flow of information is essential at all times but is especially vital in times of crisis. In particular, she highlighted the need for

solidarity with journalists and media workers in the OSCE region. Finally, she directed delegates to an online questionnaire about the safety of female journalists online, which is part of a joint initiative by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE PA towards identifying and advocating for preventive and protective mechanisms.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

The General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions was attended by **Dr. Fry, M.P., Senator Moncion, Mr. Aboultaif, M.P., Ms. Jones, M.P., Ms. Michaud, M.P., Ms. Saks, M.P., and Mr. Zimmer, M.P.**

Dr. Fry, M.P., stated that a free press was a cornerstone of democracy, particularly when journalists shine light on corruption, human rights abuses, and other wrongdoings. She noted that approximately 400 journalists were killed between 2016 and 2020, and that hundreds more have been or continue to be unjustly imprisoned or persecuted every year. She specifically highlighted the recent examples of the targeted killings of Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta, Ján Kuciak in Slovakia, and Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Arabian embassy in Turkey, as well as the persecution of journalists such as Raman Pratasevich by Belarus and Server Mustafayev by Russia. She also discussed the impact of violence against women journalists and the need to be vigilant about misinformation and disinformation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Hon. 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 (OSCE PA)
ACTIVITY	21st Winter meeting
DESTINATION	Videoconference
DATES	From February 24-25, 2022
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond Hon. Lucie Moncion Hon. Vernon White
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Hedy Fry Mr. Ziad Aboultaif Ms. Yvonne Jones Ms. Heather McPherson Ms. Kristina Michaud

Ms. Ya'ara Saks
Mr. Bob Zimmer

STAFF
Mr. Matthieu Boulianne
Mr. Brian Hermon
Mr. Robert Mason
Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard
Ms. Anne-Marie Therrien-Tremblay

TRANSPORTATION	\$ 0.00
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 0.00
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 0.00
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 0.00