

Section canadienne de
l'Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie



Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie

Report of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

36th Session of the Regional Assembly of Europe

Pristina, Kosovo

From November 11 to 13, 2024

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) participated in the 36th Regional Assembly of Europe, held in Pristina from November 11–13, 2024. The Assembly was hosted by the Kosovo Associate Branch of the APF. The Canadian delegation is honoured to present its report.

The Chair of the Canadian Branch of the APF and representative of the Americas Region of the APF, **Mr. Darrell Samson**, M.P., was accompanied by Administrative Secretary Julie Pelletier.

In addition to the Canadian Branch representing the Americas Region, parliamentarians from 16 European branches attended the meeting in Pristina, Kosovo: Albania, Andorra, Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels, Catalonia, France, Hungary, Jersey, Jura, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Northern Macedonia, Monaco, Poland, Switzerland, Vaud and Aosta Valley.

The meeting was chaired by the new APF Regional Delegate for Europe, Ms. Anne Lambelin (Belgium), with APF Secretary General Mr. Damien Cesselin.

OPENING SESSION

The 36th Regional Assembly of Europe opened with speeches by His Excellency Mr. Glauk Konjufca, Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo; His Excellency Mr. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo; Mr. Dimal Basha, Chair of the Kosovo Branch; Mr. Bruno Fuchs, APF Delegate General, via videoconference; and Ms. Anne Lambelin. The opening session closed with a speech by Mr. Oleksandr Lukashev, People's Deputy of Ukraine (Ukraine), calling on the Francophonie to maintain its solidarity with his country and its parliament in the current war.

CONFERENCE ON HYBRID WARFARE

The assembly met under the theme of “Hybrid warfare, a danger to security and democracy.” The aim of the meeting was to enrich exchanges and deepen reflection on the subject, which was approached from three angles, including the definition of strategies to prevent hybrid warfare and the importance of cooperation between French-speaking countries for a lasting solution to this issue.

The first panel focused on the sub-theme of “Information manipulation, cyberattacks, foreign interference and the instrumentalization of history. What action has been taken and what can be done? How can we protect ourselves without being weakened?”

- Mr. Didier Danet, a senior lecturer in management science at the Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan Military Academy, defined the concept of hybrid warfare, which has put an end to the peace-war dichotomy, blending traditional defence techniques with non-military strategies (cyberattacks, disinformation, economic warfare, political manipulation) and extending into the digital space with the arrival of a multitude of non-state actors.

- Mr. Quang-Minh Lepescheu, Director, EU Government Affairs, Microsoft, spoke about the role of technology companies in the conflict in Ukraine, the first large-scale hybrid war, where we saw the involvement of several private players to help one or other of the belligerents. Mr. Lepescheu also summarized the main lessons learned from the last two years of war and the challenges to be faced in the future: the usefulness of AI in predicting and thwarting attacks, the need to make the infradigital cloud and data interoperable, the need to create an international framework enabling cyberdeterrence and the importance of public-private cooperation.
- Mr. Pascal Petry, Director of the Centre de coordination, renseignement et sécurité (CCRS), spoke of the initiatives taken in Belgium to protect the 2024 federal, regional and European elections, which called for a multi-faceted response to hybrid threats.
- Mr. David Bongard, Senior Advisor, Francophonie Representation for Central and Eastern Europe, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), presented OIF-supported initiatives to combat information disorder and manipulation aimed at destabilizing democratic countries in the French-speaking world. He mentioned ODIL, a platform of francophone initiatives tackling disinformation, which brings together resources on a variety of subjects: fact-checking, regulatory initiatives and public policy, media and information literacy, news on the fight against disinformation, initiatives and innovations, etc. He also mentioned occasions on which the APF and the OIF collaborate on the issue. For example, he spoke of the recent francophone electoral mission to Moldova for the first round of the presidential election and the constitutional referendum on October 20, 2024. The APF was represented by a member of parliament from the Americas Region, Ms. Chantal Soucy (Quebec).
- Mr. Artan Fuga, a professor of communications at the University of Tirana (Albania), concluded the discussion by reflecting on the instrumentalization of history on digital platforms.

The second panel focused on the sub-theme of “The impact of the hybrid war and Russia’s war on Ukraine on politics, including defence policy, the law and democratic values.”

- Mr. Tanguy de Wilde, a professor of political science and international relations at the Université catholique de Louvain, traced the history of EU–Ukraine relations since 1994: the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the types of sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia, military aid to Ukraine and the limits and impact of various measures.
- Mr. Nezir Kraki, a lecturer in political science at the Institut d’études politiques de Fontainebleau, Université Paris-Est, Créteil, stressed the need

to maintain unity and solidarity among EU members. He also stressed the need for the EU to promote the democratic values on which it was built as weapons against Russian and other contemporary threats to the current world order. He also advocated for the inclusion of the six Balkan countries in the EU as an essential condition for a unified Europe.

The third and final panel reflected on the sub-theme of “Perspectives on a post-war Europe.”

- Mr. Yermolenko Volodymyr, Ukrainian philosopher, journalist and writer, Associate Professor, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, President of the Ukrainian Pen Club, spoke about the challenges facing Europe in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine.
- Ms. Lyudmila Makey, a Ukrainian journalist based in Kosovo, explained how she managed to inform and stay informed in wartime.
- Mr. Tanguy de Wilde again took the floor to outline the various possible scenarios for ending the Russian–Ukrainian conflict and conditions for a successful post-war period.
- Mr. Zenon Kowal, Honorary Delegate General of the French-speaking governments of Belgium, Special Advisor to the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels, provided his findings and conclusions on the 10 years of Russian aggression in Ukraine, from 2014 to 2024.

Each discussion was followed by an exchange of views, with contributions from representatives of the APF branches in attendance.

Following the panel discussions, the work of the Regional Assembly continued:

- The European Region’s updated rules of procedure were adopted by the plenary session, following their adoption by the Conference of Branch Chairs of the European Region, which met prior to the Regional Assembly.
- As Chair of the Conference of Branch Chairs of the Americas Region, **Mr. Darrell Samson** (Canada) gave a summary of the region’s activities since July 2024, including the 39th Regional Assembly of the Americas held in Toronto, Ontario (Canada), under the theme of “The Socioeconomic Impact of Francophone Immigration,” the World Acadian Congress and the 7th edition of the Forum des jeunes ambassadeurs de la Francophonie des Amériques, held in August 2024; two congresses on francophone education in October 2024; and the release of the APF’s Opinion at the Symposium on Francophone Citizen Mobility, in addition to its promotion on TV5 Monde and on the OIF program “Palabre,” during the Sommet de la Francophonie in October 2024. Lastly, he noted that the 40th Regional Assembly of the Americas will take place in Quebec City, Quebec (Canada), from September 9–12, 2025.

- The Regional Assembly of Europe concluded with the announcement that the next Conference of Branch Chairs will take place from May 18–20, 2025, in Saint-Hélier (Jersey) and that the next Regional Assembly of Europe will take place from October 20–22, 2025, in Andorra. A motion of thanks was read by the Jura Branch.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

On the sidelines of the Regional Assembly, **Mr. Darrell Samson** met with Canada's Ambassador to Croatia and Kosovo, Ms. Jessica Blitt, to discuss the geopolitical situation in the Balkans, bilateral ties between Kosovo and Canada and the place of the Francophonie in Kosovo.

Travel expenses

Travel expenses associated with this activity can be found in the delegation's financial report. This report is available in the [Financial Disclosure](#) section of the Parliamentary Diplomacy website.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-France Lalonde, MP
Chair, Canadian Branch, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie