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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the 15th Winter Meeting of the OSCE  
Parliamentary Assembly**

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

**Vienna, Austria  
February 25-26, 2016**

# Report

From 25 to 26 February 2016, a delegation of six Canadian parliamentarians attended the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA or the PA)<sup>1</sup> Winter Meeting in Vienna, Austria. **Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.**, led the delegation, which included, from the Senate, the Honourable **Senators Ghislain Maltais** and **Terry M. Mercer** and from the House of Commons, **Mr. David Tilson, M.P.**, and **Mr. Don Davies, M.P.** The delegation was accompanied by Josée Thérien, Delegation Secretary, and Julia Nicol, Advisor.

More than 250 parliamentarians from the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation met in Vienna, Austria, for the 15th OSCE PA Winter Meeting<sup>2</sup>. The primary focus of the meeting was on the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe, with other OSCE priorities such as Ukraine and counter-terrorism also being discussed. The program included opening and closing joint sessions, as well as meetings of each of the three OSCE PA General Committees (Political Affairs and Security; Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment; and Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions). In addition, a meeting of the Standing Committee was held.

## A. Standing Committee

The Standing Committee, comprised of OSCE heads of delegation and members of the Bureau, was opened by OSCE President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland). The Standing Committee agreed to the creation of an ad hoc committee on migration as proposed by Alain Neri (France), Vice-President of the OSCA PA. The Standing Committee also heard reports from the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary General and several of the PA's Special Representatives and Heads of Election Observation missions.

### Activities of the Canadian Delegation:

**Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.** participated in the meeting of the Standing Committee as Head of the Canadian Delegation.

## B. Opening Joint Session of the Three General Committees

Delegates were welcomed to the opening Joint Session of the three General Committees by OSCE PA Vice-President Christine Muttonen (Austria) and OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva. In his remarks, President Kanerva stressed the importance of real dialogue to resolve conflicts and the need for better coordination and collaboration to address terrorist threats. He also argued that the OSCE and its PA are well-suited, due to their unique, comprehensive approach to security, to assist in finding solutions for the migrant and refugee crisis. Finally, he identified a number of concerns in relation to the situation in Ukraine, including the slow pace in implementing Minsk II and anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), [Overview](#).

<sup>2</sup> Some of the remarks and reports presented at the conference are available from the OSCE PA "2016 Winter Meeting" [website](#).

<sup>3</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva](#), 25 February 2016.

Gernot Erler, the Special Representative of the Federal Government of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2016, provided remarks followed by a question and answer period. Mr. Erler stressed the importance of the PA's work in maintaining security and stability and commended the PA for its close cooperation with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in election monitoring missions.

The opening session also included speeches by the Russian and Kazakh speakers of Parliament.

### **Activities of the Canadian Delegation:**

The joint session was attended by all members of the delegation.

**Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.** asked the Special Representative, Mr. Erler, about the lack of progress in passing an addendum to the OSCE's 2004 Gender Action Plan at the Ministerial Council in 2014 and 2015 and about Germany's plans to address gender, given its commitments to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and to treating gender as a cross-cutting issue at the OSCE. Mr. Erler confirmed that Germany will be focusing on gender equality during its Chairmanship in 2016.

### **C. General Committee on Political Affairs and Security**

Chair: Roger Wicker (U.S.A.)  
Vice-Chair: Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan)  
Rapporteur: Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden)

The First General Committee was chaired by Senator Roger Wicker (U.S.A.) who discussed the impact of extremism in the OSCE area and of the crisis in Ukraine on trust between OSCE participating States. He noted the OSCE's commitment to ensuring that Ukraine does not become another frozen conflict. The First General Committee rapporteur then outlined the main points she plans to include in her report and draft resolution at the Annual Session in Tbilisi where she plans to address the issues of transnational terrorism, Ukraine, frozen conflicts, women in armed conflict and the link between security and democracy.

The delegates heard a presentation from Ambassador Christian Istrate, Chairperson of the Security Committee of the OSCE Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Romania to the OSCE. Ambassador Istrate outlined the work plan of the committee for 2016 and noted how well suited the OSCE concept of comprehensive security is to addressing the migrant and refugee crisis. The First General Committee will be debating the potential for regional cooperation to address the security implications of illegal migration while also considering human rights compliance and the nexus with human trafficking. He called for the implementation of counter-terrorism commitments through OSCE voluntary reporting systems, which he encouraged PA members to promote at home, and noted that the Committee is also focused on other issues such as cybersecurity<sup>4</sup>.

The next speaker was Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. She focused on refugees, perceptions and formation of historical narratives and the

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<sup>4</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of Ambassador Cristian Istrate](#), 26 February 2016.

United Nations' (UN) 2030 development agenda, particularly focusing on the goal of inclusiveness. She also noted a worrying trend toward heightened nationalism, polarization and the exploitation of issues relating to minorities for political gain in the OSCE region.

The special debate on “Transnational Security in the OSCE Area: Confronting Terrorism” was introduced by Alexey Lyzhenkov, OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats. He noted the need for all actors, from participating States to Partners for Co-operation to OSCE field operations and institutions and the PA, to be involved in preventing and countering terrorism and radicalization. He outlined Ministerial Declarations on preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization and on reinforcing OSCE counterterrorism efforts that were approved in December 2015. He also informed delegates about the on-going work of the OSCE to share best practices, network and build capacity at all levels to address these issues. Planned and existing projects include communications campaigns, assisting participating States to integrate a gender perspective into work countering violent extremism, and projects to empower civil society and travel document security. Mr. Lyzhenkov ended by affirming the PA members' important role as legislators, as well as political leaders who can advocate against terrorism<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Activities of the Canadian Delegation:**

The meeting of the First General Committee was attended by all members of the delegation.

In his remarks, **Mr. David Tilson, M.P.**, expressed deep concern regarding the situation in Ukraine and insufficient progress in implementing the Minks II peace agreement. He also discussed the use of sanctions in the context of the conflict, and called for any changes such as rolling back sanctions to take place only once Russia has demonstrated that it is respecting its commitments under Minsk II. He also thanked the OSCE personnel for their work in relation to Ukraine.

**Mr. Don Davies, M.P.**, stressed the importance of effective international dispute resolution mechanisms based on the rule of law to ensure genuine security. He argued that the root cause of the migrant and refugee crisis is the use of violence to resolve political conflicts, causing many to flee. He also reminded delegates of the commitments made by participating States, including the peaceful resolution of disputes and respect for the rule of law.

#### **D. General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment**

Chair: Vacant  
Vice-Chair: Nilza Sena (Portugal)  
Rapporteur: Marietta Tidei (Italy)

Vice-Chair Nilza Sena (Portugal) opened the meeting of the Second General Committee. The rapporteur outlined some ideas for her report and draft resolution at the Annual Session in Tbilisi. She discussed the importance of the COP 21 climate change

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<sup>5</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of Alexey Lyzhenkov](#), 26 February 2016.

agreement and the issue of “climate refugees,” a group she believes will continue to grow. Ms. Tidei also raised the issues of water management, in relation to pollution in the Caspian Sea and shrinking of the Aral Sea in particular, and of energy security, calling for alternatives to hydrocarbons as the primary energy source. She ended with a call for enhanced economic co-operation between OSCE participating States.

The Committee then heard a presentation from Ambassador Andreas Papadakis, Chair of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee and Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE, who outlined the committee’s 2016 work plan which includes seven themes: customs and transport administration, labour migration policy, trade facilitation/economic cooperation, the business climate, energy, water governance and disaster risk reduction/climate change. The Committee also will be addressing cross-cutting issues such as terrorist financing, good governance and the integration of a gender perspective<sup>6</sup>.

Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities spoke about the priorities of his office for 2016 as well, many of which overlapped with the planned work of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee. He also highlighted the importance of interagency cooperation<sup>7</sup>.

The special debate for this session about “Migration management: opportunities and challenges to the economy in the OSCE region,” was opened by Committee Vice-Chair Nilza Sena. She noted that migration is seen by many governments as a burden but that there can be advantages from integrating migrants, including economic benefits. She stated that effective management of migration is crucial in order to see such benefits. Ms. Tidei spoke of the experience of her country, Italy, where migrants have been important to the economy and was critical of European responses and the effect they have had on vulnerable individuals. Debate followed these initial remarks.

#### **Activities of the Canadian Delegation:**

The meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment was attended by **Senator Terry M. Mercer**. He spoke of the economic benefits of immigration, particularly since many OSCE countries have declining populations. He discussed the Canadian experience and the importance of labour market integration, including the need to eliminate barriers such as discrimination and non-recognition of credentials.

The meeting of this Committee was held concurrently with that of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, which was attended by other members of the delegation.

#### **E. General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions**

Chair: Isabel Santos (Portugal)  
Vice-Chair: Ivana Dobesova (Czech Republic)  
Rapporteur: Gordana Comic (Serbia)

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<sup>6</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of Ambassador Andreas Papadakis](#), 25 February 2016.

<sup>7</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitguden](#), 25 February 2016.

The Chair of the Third General Committee, Isabel Santos (Portugal), opened the meeting<sup>8</sup>. She voiced her disappointment that the OSCE Ministerial Council had not agreed on any documents relating to human rights in 2015, but was proud that the PA has been addressing issues in this area of the OSCE's mandate. She listed a number of areas of concern in the OSCE region, including the migrant and refugee crisis, treatment of civil society actors and political prisoners, the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, and freedom of the press.

The Rapporteur, Gordana Comic (Serbia), then presented her ideas for her report and draft resolution, expressing similar concerns regarding the stigmatization of migrants and refugees and insufficient concern for human rights. Her remarks were followed by a presentation from Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media who outlined a worrying situation with respect to limitations on civil society and declining media freedom in the OSCE region. She also expressed concerns about self-censorship in order not to offend and discussed work she has been doing with journalists from Russia and Ukraine to combat propaganda.

Michael Georg Link, Director of ODIHR, outlined his institution's recent work, which has included a report on the Guantanamo detention centre, and discussed the increase in intolerance of religious groups and the migrant and refugee crisis, among other issues. He also stressed the importance of cooperation between ODIHR and the PA on election monitoring missions.

Next, Ambassador Katja Pehrman, Chairperson of the OSCE's Human Dimension Committee and Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE presented that committee's program for 2016, which she noted reflects the German OSCE Chairmanship's priorities. Attention will be given to fundamental freedoms, national minorities, tolerance and non-discrimination, Roma and Sinti issues, gender equality, and internally displaced persons and refugees. In addition, economic, social and culture rights will be on the agenda, including rights to education, adequate housing, food and water. The rights of persons with disabilities, the prevention of torture and the protection of human rights in counter terrorism initiatives will also be addressed. Given the commitments to the rights of persons with disabilities found in the 2014 PA Baku Declaration, she suggested that this could be an area for collaboration between the state-side of the OSCE and PA delegates<sup>9</sup>.

After debate on the presentations noted above, Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, provided remarks as background for the Committee's Special Debate on "The human rights of migrants and refugees." She stressed the need to take a human rights based approach to the crisis in Europe. She urged recognition of the risk of trafficking and exploitation in situations of vulnerability such as the current mixed-migration flows, particularly where borders are closed and reliance on smugglers and traffickers increases. She discussed the efforts of her office to integrate both human and state security in the migration context, including in their work in Ukraine and in

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<sup>8</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of Isabelle Santos](#), 25 February 2016.

<sup>9</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks of Ambassador Katja Pehrman](#), General Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, 25 February 2016.

training relevant actors to identify and respond to human trafficking. She finished by recognizing the contributions of the PA to the debate with its 2015 resolution which addressed the rights of migrants and refugees and the importance of combatting human trafficking in government contracting. Debate on a broad number of human rights issues relating to the migrant and refugee crisis ensued<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Activities of the Canadian Delegation:**

The Third General Committee meeting was attended by **Senator Ghislain Maltais**, as well as **Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.**, **Mr. David Tilson, M.P.** and **Mr. Don Davies, M.P.**

**Senator Ghislain Maltais** stressed the importance of the rule of law and good governance in his remarks, expressing grave concerns regarding ISIS.

**Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.**, reminded delegates that anyone could become one of the migrants or refugees due to forces beyond their control. She argued that not responding to the needs of migrants and refugees could result in an unstable presence in Europe of individuals without legal status in Europe and a greater security threat than would be posed by welcoming them. She also called for burden sharing among OSCE participating States and to remember the human aspect of the crisis.

The final Canadian speaker for this session, **Mr. David Tilson, M.P.**, focused his remarks on the issue of human trafficking, raising concerns about the vulnerability of migrants and refugees to this practice. He noted with concern Europol reports that 10,000 child refugees have disappeared after arriving in Europe and called for collective action to prevent human trafficking and convict those responsible.

#### **F. Joint Session of the Three Committees and Special Debate on the Collective Response to the Migrant and Refugee Crisis**

The closing joint session, “The migrant and refugee crisis in the OSCE area: Strengthening the collective response,” was chaired by OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva and Lord Peter Bowness (United Kingdom). OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier applauded the growing cooperation between the PA and the governmental side of the OSCE and discussed a number of areas the OSCE is working on, including monitoring in Ukraine. **Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.**, in her capacity as OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues, addressed the Joint Session (see below for further details).

The second part of the joint session was devoted to an open debate on the OSCE’s response to the migrant and refugee crisis which began with an address from Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. He noted that the migrant and refugee crisis has tested the unity and principles of the EU and argued that raising walls will not solve the problem. Isabel Santos, OSCE PA Third Committee Chair then presented a report from her committee’s leadership with recommendations for the OSCE and participating States to address the migrant and

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<sup>10</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Remarks by Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova](#), General Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, 25 February 2016.

refugee crisis based on trips she and other PA delegates took to Turkey, Italy, Serbia and the Czech Republic to see the situation firsthand<sup>11</sup>.

Due to the high level of interest in the special debate from OSCE parliamentarians, the Secretariat limited the speaker's list in order to ensure that at least one speaker from each participating State had the opportunity to make remarks.

### **Activities of the Canadian Delegation:**

All members of the delegation attended the Joint Session and the special debate.

In her gender address, **Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.**, called on delegates to consider gender equality as a solution to issues such as conflict, migration and refugees, rather than as a problem. She applauded the PA for increasing the number of women who have been elected to positions on the Bureau and argued that the PA can be an example for other multilateral organizations. At the same time, she urged delegates to act, not just talk about gender equality because the same issues are still being discussed that were discussed in Beijing in 1995. Dr. Fry also submitted a written report calling for gender-based analysis of the needs and response to the gender and migrant crisis<sup>12</sup>.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

On Wednesday, 24 February 2016, the delegation met with the Canadian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Her Excellency Isabelle Poupart, and other Embassy staff for a briefing session on the main issues in Canada-OSCE relations. The briefing focused on a number of issues including European perspectives on the migrant and refugee crisis. Jonathan Sauvé of the Embassy of Canada to Austria and Slovakia provided background regarding the migrant and refugee crisis. That same day, Ambassador Isabelle Poupart provided the delegation with the opportunity to meet with civil society actors to discuss human rights matters relating to the OSCE.

Ambassador Poupart and members of the mission's staff also attended sessions of the OSCE PA's Winter Meeting.

**Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P.**, was a speaker at a side-event on 25 February 2016 organized by the OSCE Permanent Delegation of Finland on the topic of "Enhancing Women's Political Participation." She called for the OSCE to be an example for participating States and noted the important role of political parties in promoting women's access to elected office and leadership roles. In addition, she also had a number of meetings, including with members of the Afghan delegation, and ODIHR personnel.

**Senator Terry M. Mercer** attended the Finnish side-event, while **Mr. David Tilson, M.P.**, and **Mr. Don Davies, M.P.**, attended another side-event at the same time sponsored by the Ukrainian delegation "Violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Crimea."

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<sup>11</sup> Isabel Santos et al., [Migration Crisis in the OSCE Area: Towards Greater OSCE Engagement](#), February 2016.

<sup>12</sup> OSCE PA Winter Meeting, Vienna, [Address by Dr. Hedy Fry, Special Representative on Gender Issues to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly](#), February 2016.

Members of the Canadian delegation also attended a reception hosted by the Austrian National Parliament, where they had the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other national delegations.

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**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	15th Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Vienna, Austria
<b>DATES</b>	February 25-26, 2016
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Ghislain Maltais, Senator Hon. Terry M. Mercer, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. Mr. David Tilson, M.P. Mr. Don Davies, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Josée Thérien, Secretary of Delegation Ms. Julia Nicol, Advisor
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 41,186.68
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 7,373.81

<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 578.21</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>\$ 39.71</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 49,178.41</b>