

In Samarkand forum, PA President and human rights Chair stress parliamentary role in human rights promotion

SAMARKAND, 22 November 2018 – Addressing the opening session of the Asian Forum for Human Rights today, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia) and human rights committee Chair Margareta Kiener Nellen (MP, Switzerland) stressed the central role that parliaments play in upholding human rights commitments domestically and internationally.

Organized by the Government of Uzbekistan together with international partners, the Asian Forum on Human Rights brings together some 150 participants to reaffirm commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 70 years ago, as well as the OSCE's human dimension commitments.

Noting that no country can boast a perfect human rights record, President Tsereteli highlighted that the international community no longer simply reacts and condemns human rights violations.

“Today, it has become ingrained in our societies that we should do our utmost to prevent human rights violations from ever happening,” said Tsereteli. “It should not come as a surprise that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development follows a human-rights based approach. We now agree globally not only that development should improve the situation of human rights, we furthermore say that human rights standards should guide all our efforts. This has long been the OSCE approach, which puts the human dimension at the heart of our collective security.”

Tsereteli also highlighted the key role which parliamentarians can play in upholding human rights. “The particular position which we occupy in our societies – as a link between our citizens and our governments – makes of us, parliamentarians, key partners in the global efforts to ensure the protection of human rights.”

Addressing a working session focused on the role of state bodies, Kiener Nellen, Chair of the OSCE PA's General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, highlighted the importance of effective human rights education, as a key tool to embed respect for human rights in society.

In the OSCE PA's Berlin Declaration [[LINK](#)], adopted earlier this year, the OSCE PA formally called on OSCE countries “to integrate education about human rights into primary and secondary school curricula, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, under the oversight of national Parliaments, in the interests of long-term understanding and implementation of human rights commitments”.

“While the importance of parliamentary oversight and legislation on human rights issues cannot be overstated, as a long-time member of the Swiss Parliament and a lawyer, I would argue that human rights education is even more important than legislation; whereas laws ensure that human rights approaches are a part of our governance, education works to make human rights a part of our citizenry's social thinking. Pursuing both of these tracks is the best way to ensure that respect for human rights becomes truly sustainable” said Kiener Nellen.

The OSCE PA delegation's participation in the forum follows a series of high-level meetings in Kazakhstan [[LINK](#)] and Uzbekistan [[LINK](#)] earlier this week.