

Closing Session

Damien COTTIER

Chair of the Swiss delegation to PACE, Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
CHAIR OF THE CLOSING SESSION



Since 2019, **Damien Cottier** is a member of the Swiss National Council. In 2022 he was elected President of the Liberal-Radical Parliamentary Group (PLR). In this capacity he sits on the Bureau of the National Council. He also sits on the Political Institutions Committee. In the past he was a member of the Grand Council (Parliament) of the Republic and Canton of Neuchâtel for more than 10 years and in two communal parliaments, one of which he chaired (Le Landeron, NE, 1998).

Since January 2020, Mr Cottier has also represented Switzerland in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). For the period 2022-2023, he chairs both the Swiss parliamentary delegation in Strasbourg and the Assembly's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. In this capacity he is a member of the Bureau and the Standing Committee of the PACE.

Mr Cottier spent eight years as head of cabinet and personal assistant to former Federal Councilor Didier Burkhalter, Federal Minister of the Interior (2009-2011) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012-2017). In 2014, he assisted Mr Burkhalter while he was simultaneously President of the Swiss Confederation and Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

From 2018 to 2020, Mr Cottier held diplomatic functions at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva. As head of the humanitarian affairs section, he was responsible for relations with the ICRC, UNHCR, IFRC and IOM. In the past, Mr. Cottier has also worked for the Swiss Business Federation (*economiesuisse*), the Liberal-Radical Party and the Swiss Consulate General in New York.

Rast'o KUŽEL

Executive Director MEMO 98 / General Rapporteur of the Conference



Rast'o Kužel is a media & election expert with over 24 years of international experience.

Since 1998, he has been running MEMO 98, a media-monitoring organization with extensive experience in delivering analyses on behalf of international institutions as well as technical assistance to different electoral stakeholders. Rast'o has worked as a media and election analyst, consultant, and trainer, participating in a number of election observation missions and projects. For the last 6 years, Rast'o has focused intensively on the issue of online disinformation in the context of elections as well as on the role of social media during elections and ways to tackle their negative impact on elections.

He co-authored a White Paper on Social Media, Disinformation and Electoral Integrity to guide International Foundation for Electoral Systems in this area and the UNESCO/UNDP guide Elections in Digital Times published by UNESCO which is a practical guide focusing on Internet, Social Media, Social Messaging, and AI.

Drawing upon his experience in media monitoring, Rast'o wrote a media monitoring toolkit, which was developed within the framework of the Council of Europe project "Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness, and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine", implemented within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018–2022.

Livia LEU

State Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland



Livia Leu joined the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in 1989. She subsequently held various positions including in the International Organisations Division, the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York, the Swiss Embassy in Cairo and the Americas Division and the Africa/Middle East Division, which she directed as Ambassador. From 2009 to 2013, she headed the Swiss Embassy in Tehran. In August 2013, she took up her post as the Federal Council's Delegate for Trade Agreements and Head of Bilateral Economic Relations at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) in Bern. From 2018 to October 2020, Livia Leu served as Swiss Ambassador to France and Monaco. In October 2020, the Federal Council appointed her as FDFA State Secretary and Chief Negotiator with the European Union.

Ms Leu holds a degree in law and was admitted to the bar in the canton of Zurich.