

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Conference hosts and dignitaries

Martin CANDINAS

President of the National Council of the Swiss Parliament



Martin Candinas is the President of the National Council of the Swiss Parliament for 2022/2023. As a representative of the canton of Graubünden (Grisons), the concerns of the mountain regions and tourism are of particular interest to Mr Candinas. In the National Council (member since 2011 for the Center Party), he is a member of the Committee for Transport and Telecommunications and the Committee for Security Policy. In addition, the topics of family and social welfare-policy are of particular importance Mr Candinas, and he is committed to a forward-looking climate and energy policy.

Tiny KOX

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)



Tiny Kox is the current President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), elected to office in January 2022.

He graduated with a degree in Law from the University of Tilburg and worked at the Tilburg Law Centre until his election to the Tilburg Municipal Council in 1982. He served as leader of the local Socialist Party (SP) group in the Council until 1999. He was also General Secretary of the SP between 1993 and 2003. Mr Kox was elected to the Dutch Senate in 2003 and has been leader of the Socialist Party in the Senate since then. He has been a member of the Dutch delegation to the PACE since 2003 and has held the roles of Vice-President to the Assembly, General Rapporteur on the Budget and Intergovernmental Programme and Chairperson of the United European Left political group.

Bjørn BERGE

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe



Bjørn Berge has served as the Council of Europe's Deputy Secretary General since 1 March 2021. His priorities include shaping the Programme and Budget, while ensuring that the Organisation's activities have maximum impact in advancing democracy, human rights and the rule of law. He also oversees the Council of Europe's staff policy, as well as other key areas of the work of the Organisation.

Before taking up his post, Mr Berge was for four years Director General and Secretary to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Between 2009-2017, he served as Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, helping to prepare, co-ordinate and implement a number of comprehensive reforms of the Organisation.

As a former Norwegian diplomat, he served as International Adviser to the Prime Minister and as Deputy Director of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet responsible for all matters related to Parliament.

Mr Berge holds a M.A. in International Relations from the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., USA.

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.

Claire BAZY MALAURIE

President of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe



Claire Bazy Malaurie is member of the Constitutional Council of France since 2010. In 2022 she was elected President of the Venice Commission, of which she has been member since 2014.

A graduate of the National School of Administration in France (1978-1980), Ms Bazy Malaurie has held varied positions in the French government, from Senior Public Auditor of the French Court of Audit (1990-1994) to Director of Hospitals at the French Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (1995-1998). She was member of the Commission for the compensation of victims of spoliation resulting from anti-Semitic legislation in force during the Occupation (1999-2002), Chair of the Board of Directors of the Regional Administration Institute (IRA) of Metz (2001-2008) and Chair of the monitoring committee of the laws relating to the rights and responsibilities of universities (2008-2010). She has been decorated with the order of *Officier de la Légion d'honneur* (2009) and *Officier de l'Ordre national du Mérite* (2005).

Leendert VERBEEK

President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe



Leendert Verbeek is a Dutch politician serving as the King's Commissioner of Flevoland since 2008. In 2021 he was elected President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

Mr Verbeek attended the Academy for Educational Labour in Baam and debuted his career as a youth worker in Leiden. Ten years later Verbeek started his political career through political institutions, ending up as an alderman in Houten (1989–96). A member of the Labour Party (PvdA), he served as Major of Purmerend from 2003 to 2008. In November 2008, Mr Verbeek was appointed the Queen's Commissioner (in 2013 the title changed to King's Commissioner) for the province of Flevoland.

Conference chairperson

Damien COTTIER

Chair of the Swiss delegation to PACE, Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights



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.

Conference Moderator and General Rapporteur

David EADES

Chief Presenter, BBC/ Conference Moderator



For the last three decades, **David Eades** has worked as a frontline presenter and broadcaster for the BBC. He has been Europe Correspondent, Ireland Correspondent and Senior Sports News Correspondent, covering stories as wide-ranging as the death of Princess Diana, to the Peace Process in Northern Ireland, the launch of the Euro and Brexit.

As a presenter, David has focused overwhelmingly on live television, fronting election coverage in many countries, flagship news and business shows as well as many other debates and programmes.

David has also worked on countless conferences, building specialist knowledge on issues including engineering, sustainability and climate, and geopolitics. David is a fluent French speaker, having lived in both France and Belgium, and a German speaker.

Rasťo KUŽEL

Executive Director MEMO 98 / General Rapporteur of the Conference



Rasťo 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. Rasťo 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, Rasťo 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, Rastó 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.

SESSION 1: Pandemic and the Polls – the impact of Covid-19 on elections

Damien COTTIER

*Chair of the Swiss delegation to PACE, Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
CHAIR OF SESSION 1*



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.

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Massimo TOMMASOLI

Director of Global Programmes and Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the United Nations.



Massimo Tommasoli is a policy specialist with extensive experience in democracy building, democratic governance, social development, evaluation and aid effectiveness. He is responsible for developing, enhancing and strengthening strategic partnerships, policy advocacy and outreach of International IDEA at

the UN General Assembly and in other multilateral policy fora, as well as with democracy building institutions based in North America (USA and Canada).

Mr Tommasoli is International IDEA's Director of Operation in Stockholm. He previously worked as Head of the Good Governance and Conflict Prevention Unit in the Development Cooperation Directorate at the OECD in Paris. He held positions at the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, and at UNESCO in Addis Ababa.

Visiting scholar at the LUISS University in Rome, he lectured at the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership at the City College of New York, the UN System Staff College in Turin, and various Italian Universities (Bergamo, Chieti, Milan, Pisa). He has field experience in sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania), Latin America (Colombia) and the Russian Federation.

Eirik HOLMØYVIK

Professor of constitutional law at the University of Bergen, member of the Venice Commission



Eirik Holmøyvik is professor of constitutional law at the University of Bergen, Norway. He has been a member and substitute member of the Venice Commission since 2016. He has been rapporteur on many electoral law opinions and represented the Commission in PACE election observation missions. From 2017-2020 he was a member of the law commission that drafted a new election code for Norway, including new emergency provisions in the Constitution. In 2020 he wrote an expert opinion for the Norwegian government on the constitutionality of postponing or prolonging the 2021 election due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alexandr BERLINSCHII

Secretary of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova



Alexandr Berlinschii was appointed a member of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of the Republic of Moldavia and holds the position of Secretary of the CEC from 2021. Previously, he took up the Deputy Head position (from 2014 to 2016) and has been heading the Elections Management Division of the Central

Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova starting from 2016 to 2021. He started his professional activity in the public administration department of the Municipality City Hall.

Mr. Berlinschii holds a degree in Political Sciences from the State University of Moldova and a Master's degree in criminal law from the Free International University of Moldova. He has also followed training courses in the field of Security and National Defence at the Military Academy of Moldova.

Matteo MECACCI

Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)



Matteo Mecacci has been Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) since December 2020.

Prior to that he spent 7 years as President of the International Campaign for Tibet. He headed the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to Georgia in 2013 and was a Member of the Italian Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee and of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 2008– 2013. From 2000 to 2008 he was Representative to the United Nations in New York of “No Peace Without Justice” and the “Transnational Radical Party”. He holds a JD in International Law from the University of Florence.

Roberto MONTELLA

Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly



Roberto Montella assumed his duties as Secretary General of the OSCE PA in January 2016. He was re-elected by the Standing Committee in 2019 for a second five-year mandate starting 1 January 2021. He previously served in the International Secretariat as Director of Presidential Administration. Montella has held positions at OSCE field missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, and Serbia and

¹ All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Montenegro, fulfilling a range of advisory, peacebuilding and management functions. He also served as Head of the OSCE South Serbia Regional Office and Head of the European Center for Minority Issues in Kosovo. Montella has taken part in dozens of election observation missions in the OSCE area and the Middle East, including as Co-ordinator of Long Term Election Observers for The Carter Center. He has served as political advisor to an Italian senator and PACE Vice-President, among other advisory roles. He also holds campaign-related and corporate experience.

SESSION 2: Universal suffrage amid universal suffering – how natural disasters distort elections

Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU-TSOVILIS

Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

CHAIR OF SESSION 2



At the time of her election in January 2021, **Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilis** already had twenty-seven years of professional experience at the Council of Europe. She had worked closely with dozens of political figures from all over Europe and from all walks of life within the Parliamentary Assembly. In particular, she had advised four Secretaries General of the Assembly, several Assembly and Committee Chairpersons, and for a dozen years she had headed the secretariat of two parliamentary committees: the Monitoring Committee and the Political Affairs and Democracy Committee.

Thanks to her contribution in setting up the PACE monitoring procedure, she was chosen by the Directorate of Strategic Planning (DSP) to lead a team and carry out the monitoring work of the Committee of Ministers in a new way. Her doctoral thesis in law at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence, Italy) is on the European Convention on Human Rights. She started her career in the Organisation at the European Commission of Human Rights.

Erik ASPLUND

Senior Programme Officer, International IDEA



Erik Asplund is a Senior Programme Officer in the Electoral Processes Programme, International IDEA. Erik is co-author of 'Elections During Emergencies and Crises: Lessons for Electoral Integrity from the Covid-19 Pandemic' (2023) and International IDEA's focal point on natural hazards and elections. He is currently serving as the Deputy Chair of the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) programme. Since joining International IDEA in 2009 Erik has worked directly with over two dozen election

management bodies and civil society organizations in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America. He holds a Master's in International Studies from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

Bernd VÖHRINGER

*President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
Lord Mayor of Sindelfingen, Baden-Württemberg*



Bernd Vöhringer is Lord Mayor of Sindelfingen, a city with 65,000 inhabitants in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. He studied Economics at the University of Hohenheim, in Stuttgart. In 2003 he completed his PhD on information and communication technology within the New Public Management. From 1994 to 2000 he was elected as city councillor of Sindelfingen. In 2001 he was elected as Lord Mayor and re-elected in 2009 and 2016.

Dr. Vöhringer is politically committed to European and global issues. For many years he served as President of the EPP Group and head of the German delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in the Council of Europe. Since 2021 he serves as President of the Local Chamber of the Congress and Vice-President of the Congress.

Emre TOROS

*Professor of Political Science and Dean of the faculty of Communication, Hacettepe University
Fulbright scholar at Harvard University*



Emre Toros is a professor of Political Science and dean at the Faculty of Communication, Hacettepe University Ankara, Türkiye. He has carried out his academic studies both in Türkiye and abroad, including King's College London, Malmö and Stanford Universities. He studies political behaviour, and his primary interests are social research design, including data collection, processing, analysis and reporting. Currently, he is affiliated with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at Harvard University as a Fulbright visiting scholar. Professor Toros' most recent project is on electoral integrity in Türkiye. In this project, he attempts

to re-utilise the literature on electoral integrity and propose a new framework for research and analysis, offering a theory that identifies the causes and consequences of electoral integrity and malpractice at individual and institutional levels.

SESSION 3/ PANEL 1: Upholding the integrity of elections in times of major security crisis

Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ

Vice-Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on Conflicts concerning Council of Europe member States
PANEL CHAIR



Pierre-Alain Fridez is a Swiss doctor and politician. He obtained a federal diploma in medicine in 1982 and carried out post-graduate training in various hospitals in French-speaking Switzerland.

General practice in Fontenais since October 1988.

Mr Fridez is member of the Socialist Party since 1996. Between 1997 and 2008, he served as Mayor of Fontenais. Member of the Jura cantonal parliament from 1998 to 2006, then from 2010 to 2011, he is now National Councillor since December 2011. Member of the Security Policy Committee, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe since January 2016. Chairman of the Swiss delegation in 2020 and 2021. Chairman of the Committee on Migration in 2020 and 2021. Member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie.

Simon GEISSBÜHLER

Ambassador, Head of the Peace and Human Rights Division, Swiss Foreign Ministry



Ambassador **Simon Geissbühler** joined the Swiss diplomatic service in 2000. In April 2020, he assumed his current mission as the Head of the Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Prior to that, he served as the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) of the Embassy of Switzerland in the United States (2017-2020). From 2013-2017, he was the Deputy Head of Americas Division and the Head of the Foreign Interests Section (protection power mandate for the U.S. in Iran) at the Americas Division of the FDFA. He was the DCM at the Swiss Embassy in Poland (2010-2013) and in Romania (2007-2010). He served as the diplomatic collaborator of the Head of the FDFA from 2004-2007. Before that, he was a diplomatic collaborator covering western and northern Europe at the FDFA (2002-2004). He completed two years of

diplomatic training at the Swiss Embassy in Mexico City (2001-2002) and at the Kosovo Desk of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Berne (2000-2001).

In 2000, Simon Geissbühler earned his Ph.D. in social sciences (Dr.rer.soc.) from the University of Berne. After receiving his master's degree (lic.phil.hist.) in history in 1997, he worked as a researcher at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Berne (1997-2000). He studied history and political science at the University of Berne (1993-1994; 1995-1997) and at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) (1994-1995).

Stewart DICKSON

*Thematic Spokesperson of the Congress of Local and Regional authorities on the observation of elections
Politician, member of the Northern Ireland Assembly*



Stewart Dickson is a full-time politician and Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, first elected in 2011 and subsequently re-elected in 2017 and 2022. A former Local Council member for over 30 years. Thematic Spokesperson for the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on the Observation of Local and Regional Elections, Mr Dickson is the First Vice President of the Congress Monitoring Committee; he is also the Leader of the United Kingdom delegation to Congress.

Stewart has participated in or been leader of over 20 Congress Election Observation Missions to member states over the last ten years. In addition, he is special rapporteur on Mostar and has been active in encouraging recently successful elections in the City of Mostar, he has also participated in a recent Citizens Assembly initiative in that City. Stewart Dickson is Vice President of the Council for Democratic Elections which is party of the Venice Commission.

Irena HADZIABIĆ

*Member of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Expert of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe*



Irena Hadžiabdić is currently serving as a member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Central Election Commission (BiH CEC), but she has also served twice as CEC BiH President (2010-2011 and 2017 - 2018). She has spent the past 26 years in the field of election management, first with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), then as Executive Director of IFES in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and also as the Executive Director of the Association of Election Officials in BiH (AEOBiH). In 2007, she was appointed by the BiH Parliamentary Assembly as a member of the BiH Central Election Commission (BiH CEC) and she is serving her second term of 7 years.

In the period from June 2011 to September 2012, Dr Hadžiabdić was president of the Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO); she represented the BiH CEC in the Executive Board of the ACEEEO and until October 2016 she also represented the BiH CEC in the Oversight and Audit Committee of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB). She is also a member of IFES Board of Directors.

Dr Hadžiabdić graduated from the Belgrade Faculty of Law. She holds a M.S. in European Union Policy, Law and Management from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen and a Ph.D. in Juridical Science.

In 2013, she received an International Electoral Award for outstanding achievements in election management. In May of 2019 she was named “person of the year” award for public administration and in June of 2022 she received IFES’ Joe C. Baxter Award for excellence in election administration.

Vassilis NTOUSAS

Head of European Operations, German Marshall Fund’s Alliance for Securing Democracy



Vassilis Ntousas is Head of European Operations for German Marshall Fund’s (GMF) Alliance for Securing Democracy. His research interests lie in European foreign policy and the European Union’s global engagement.

Prior to joining GMF, he was the Senior International Relations Policy Advisor at the Foundation for European Progressive Studies in Brussels, where he led the foundation’s global research, advocacy, and strategic convening work. In 2019–2020, he held the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Academy fellowship at Chatham House, where he remains an Academy Associate with the institute’s Europe program. He is the author of several policy papers and regularly comments on global affairs for international media outlets.

Ntousas holds an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and a BA in International Relations and Politics from the University of Sheffield.

SESSION 3/ PANEL 2: Suffrage after the canons fall silent – preparing Ukraine for its post-war elections

Nacho SÁNCHEZ AMOR

Member of the European Parliament (Spain, S&D)
PANEL CHAIR



Nacho SÁNCHEZ AMOR is Spanish member of the European Parliament (EP) since 2019. He is full member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, being the current Standing Rapporteur for Türkiye; he is also full member of the Sub-committee on Human Rights, where he is the coordinator (spokesperson) of his political group (Social&Democrats) and member of the EP's Democracy and Election Group (DEG), in charge of the election observation activities. In the remit of DEG, he's been the leading member for the organisation of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) Implementation Meeting of 2022 and internal reflection processes on election observation. He has an extensive experience in international policy, human rights and election observation - having conducted over 20 election observation missions, several of them as chief observer. He has previously been Secretary of State (deputy minister) for Territorial Policy (2018-2019) in the Spanish Government. He was member of the National Parliament (2011-2018), where he was member of the Spanish delegation to the OSCE PA; member of the regional Parliament Extremadura (2007-2011) and Vice-President of the Junta de Extremadura (2004- 2007), the government of his home region. Graduated in Law from the Complutense University.

Volodymyr VEHNER

Executive Director of the Kyiv-Mohyla Rule of Law Center, Kyiv



Volodymyr Venher is an associate professor at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. He also acts as Executive Director at the Kyiv-Mohyla Rule of Law Research Centre. He was a visiting professor to the "School of Ukrainian Law" (annually) at the Faculty of Law and Administration, Jagiellonian University

(Krakow, Poland) (2014-2023); visiting professor at the Université Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas (Paris, French Republic) (2018) and visiting fellow at the Brasenose College and the Institute of European and comparative Law, University of Oxford (2022-2023).

Dr Venher conducts comprehensive research on the theoretical foundations and practice of implementing the rule of law and human rights standards in Ukraine. His research activity is aimed at developing and substantiating the methods of applying the effectiveness criteria for the public authorities, particularly in the following areas: the provision of public services, the organization and conduct of elections and judicial control for protection of human rights. Dr Venher is currently working on constitutional and legal issues of implementing the principle of separation of powers and limiting discretionary powers as components of the rule of law.

Oleh DIDENKO

Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine



Graduate of law at the Yuri Fedkovych National University of Chernivtsi and holder of an MA in Public Administration Management, **Oleh Didenko** started his career as an adviser and assistant to an MP and as legal adviser and First Deputy Head of the legal department of the Central Executive Committee of “Our Ukraine” party. Before joining the Central Election Commission in 2014, he was running a private law practice. In 2018 Didenko completed an international internship to ensure the effective investigation of election fraud and their prevention (European Center of Electoral Support, Italy). In 2019, he was appointed Member of the Central Election Commission; on the same day he was elected Chairman of the Central Election Commission.

Olga AIVAZOVSKA

Chairperson of GNDEM, Chairperson of the Civil Network OPORA, international expert in electoral matters



Olga Aivazovska is Head of the Board of the Civil Network OPORA NGO, an international expert in electoral matters and developing draft laws. She is co-founder of the International Center for Ukrainian Victory and Center for War Crimes Documentation (Warsaw).

Ms Aivazovska was director of national, non-partisan observation missions in Ukraine with over 25,000 activists involved from 2010 to 2021 and participated in electoral observation in more than ten countries of Europe. She represented Ukraine in the political sub-group of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine-Russia-OSCE), settling the conflict in Eastern Ukraine (2016-2018), and the Head of the Board of Global Network of Domestic Monitors (GNDEM). GNDEM, with 251 member organizations in 89 countries and territories, has worked to facilitate and enhance the critical work of citizen election monitors throughout the world.

Ms Aivazovska was included in the top 100 most influential women of Ukraine in 2014-2021 (according to political editions of *Focus* magazine and the *Novoe Vremia*). Olga Aivazovska is an alumnus of the Draper Hills Summer Fellowship on Democracy and Development Program at Stanford and the Ukrainian school of political studies.

Meaghan FITZGERALD

Head of Election Dept, ODIHR



Meaghan Fitzgerald holds degrees in International Affairs, Russian Studies, and Law. She began her career with the US State Department in Belarus and Estonia as a political analyst. Her first experience with the OSCE was in 2002 in Belarus as the Human Dimension Officer after which she spent two years with the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe. Following law school, Meaghan began working in election assistance for the United Nations Mission in Sudan where she was the External Relations Adviser for the 2010 elections and Legal/Political Adviser for the 2011 Referendum. From 2011-2019, she contributed to election observation missions as Mission Director, Deputy Head of Mission and Legal Analyst with the OSCE and The Carter Center, she did analysis of election legislation for Democracy Reporting International and lectured on observation. Meaghan joined the OSCE's office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights in 2019 as the Deputy Head of the Democratization Department and later became the Head of the Democratization Department. In June 2021, Meaghan became the Head of ODIHR's Election Department managing all of the offices work on elections and all ODIHR election observation efforts.

SESSION 4/ PANEL 1:

At the mercy of digital: protecting the vote in the digital warfare

Pórhildur Sunna ÆVARSDOTTIR

*Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on AI and Human Rights
Icelandic politician of the Pirate Party, human rights lawyer and journalist*

CHAIR OF SESSION 4



Pórhildur Sunna ÆVARSDOTTIR is an Icelandic politician of the Pirate party. She holds an LLM degree from the University of Utrecht in international human rights and criminal law. After her studies she became an intern at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, did legal volunteer work and worked as a freelance journalist. In 2016, she was elected to the Althing (Icelandic parliament) for the Southwest Constituency. In the same year Pórhildur became chairperson of the Pirate Party. In 2017 she was elected as the spokesperson for the Pirates.

Since 2017, Pórhildur has represented Iceland in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where she has held successive high-level posts: Chairperson of national delegation (2017-2018), Vice-Chairperson of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (2018-2021), Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Conflicts concerning Council of Europe Member States (2018 - 2020), Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights (2018-2020), Vice-Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (2021-2023), General Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights (since 2022), and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs (2023).

Thomas SCHNEIDER

*Chairperson of the Council of Europe Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI)
Head of International Affairs, Federal Office of Communication, Switzerland*



Ambassador Thomas Schneider is leading the Swiss delegation in various fora in the field of digital and internet governance, including AI. In the past 20 years, he has chaired several international committees and co-initiated several dialogue fora on national and international levels. He is currently the chair of the Council of Europe's Committee on AI (CAI), mandated to negotiate a binding convention on AI. He has been a co-initiator of EuroDIG and is the president of its Support Association, since 2012. He is a bureau member of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (he was chair in 2018-19 and vice-chair in 2020-2021). He chaired several CDMSI expert groups. He has also been a member of the bureau of the CoE's Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence in 2019-2021. From 2014-2017, he was the chair of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee and in this role negotiated the compromise among governments and with the other stakeholders regarding the "IANA Stewardship transition", the biggest reform in the ICANN system. He was a vice-chair of the OECD's Committee for Digital Economy Policy (2020-2022). He was responsible for the organization of the 12th UN IGF in Geneva in 2017 co-chair of the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group in 2017. He participated in the meetings of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, as personal advisor of Swiss president Doris Leuthard (2018-2019). He has also been a co-initiator of the Swiss Internet Governance Forum, since 2013. Since 2003, he has been coordinating the Swiss activities with regard to the follow-up of the UN World Summit on the Information Society.

David ERAY

*Head of the Swiss delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
Thematic Spokesperson of the Congress on Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence,
Minister of the Environment for the Canton of Jura*



David ERAY is a member of the Independent Christian Social Party, elected to the Jura Government in 2015 and heading the Ministry of the Environment, which also includes transport, energy, infrastructure and IT.

He is a member of the political management of the Swiss Digital Administration (Political Management Committee/Digital Public Services Switzerland), an observer at the Regional Forum of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA – EFTA), Chairman of the Swiss delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Spokesman of the Congress on Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence. Engineer in microtechnology, and holder of an executive-MBA, before entering politics, David Eray had worked for 21 years in the industrial sector in Switzerland as well as in the United States and India, before entering politics.

Iuliia Spycher

Researcher on Digitalisation of Public Administration, University of Bern



Iuliia Spycher holds a doctoral degree in Public Administration with the focus on Public Sector Digitalization from the Ragnar Nurkse Department of Innovation and Governance, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia. She devoted her PhD to the topic of the consequences of Internet voting for election administration. Iuliia worked on the cases of electoral technology introduction in the Åland Islands (an autonomous region of Finland), Canada, Estonia and Lithuania.

Currently she works at the “Kompetenzzentrum für Public Management” at the University of Bern on a research project investigating the best models for the public governance of digitalization in Switzerland, contributes to the development of online voting standards in Canada and the revision of the OSCE/ODIHR Handbook for the Observation of Information and Communication Technologies in Elections. Previously, she worked with the Election-Watch.EU and International IDEA on the topics of delivering elections among the pandemics.

In her free time, she participates in election observation missions.

SESSION 4/ PANEL 2: Harnessing the power of technology and innovation – rethinking electoral procedures

Therese PEARCE-LAANELA

Head of Electoral Processes, International IDEA



Therese Pearce Laanela serves as Head of Programme - Electoral Processes at International IDEA, an intergovernmental organisation dedicated to supporting democracy worldwide. With thirty years of experience in elections and electoral assistance, her current focus is developing cutting edge knowledge resources to support a global election practitioner community. Through previous affiliations with the Carter Center, the United Nations, IFES, the OSCE, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and the European Union, she has served as project lead or senior expert in international election observer missions, electoral assistance missions, capacity building projects and speaking engagements across Africa, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. Her master's degree focused on the links between political financing, corruption and electoral systems in Japan; her doctoral studies at the Australian National University examine trust in electoral institutions.

Olivier KASK

Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission of Estonia



Olivier Kask is an Estonian judge, president of the National Election Commission (since 2019), and an expert on voting rights in Europe. His research focuses on constitutional law with an emphasis on electoral law, human rights, and administrative law. He is also co-author and co-editor of the Estonian Constitution.

In 2017-2022, Mr Kask was alternate member of Management Board of European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and between 2010-2016, ad hoc judge at the European Court of Human Rights. In his

earlier career, he has been a lecturer as well as Head of Public Law Department of the Estonian Ministry of Justice.

Mr Kask is a long-standing member of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, where he served as full member from 2005-2021 and as substitute member since 2021. In parallel, between 2006-2022, he was a member of the Venice Commission's Council for Democratic Elections, which he presided in 2017-2022.

Giorgi KALANDARISHVILI

Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Georgia



Giorgi Kalandarishvili leads the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia since the 3rd of August 2021, where he has worked since 2008. From 9 September 2019 to 25 May 2021, he was the Head of the Human Resources Management Department, from May 25 until his election as the Chairperson, he led Human Resources Management and Workforce Security Department at the CEC. In addition, Mr Kalandarishvili was the Chair of the Gender Equality Council of Election Administration (EA) as well as the CEC's Quality Manager in accordance with the requirements of the international standard ISO 9001: 2015.

In 2012 -2019 he was the Head of Legal Maintenance Division, and before that (2008-2012), Head of the Public Relations and Press Department.

Before joining the CEC, Mr Kalandarishvili worked in different positions, including in JSC "Energy Invest" and the State Representative/Governor's Administration of Imereti.

Giorgi Kalandarishvili received his education from Akaki Tsereteli State University in Kutaisi and Ioane Petritsi University. He has been participant in numerous international study courses including in Estonia, Poland, Israel, India, and Sweden. He has gained education in electoral, legal, gender equality, electoral technologies, cyber hygiene, effective public administration, public relations and media, personal data protection, etc. Giorgi Kalandarishvili also has many years of experience in participating in election observation missions in different countries. He has been involved in short-term as well as long-term observation missions as an international observer. Additionally, Mr. Kalandarishvili underwent OSCE/ODIHR training for long-term observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and holds an appropriate certificate.

Barbara PERRIARD

Head of Political Rights Section, Federal Chancellery of Switzerland



Barbara Perriard is a Swiss lawyer and has been appointed Head of the Political Rights Section in the Federal Chancellery in 2010. Together with her team Barbara oversees the popular votes and general elections on the Federal level. Her Section is furthermore in charge of popular initiatives and voluntary referenda, the legislation on political rights and the project “Vote électronique” (e-voting and e-collecting).

Previously Barbara Perriard served as a scientific advisor in the Federal Office for Refugees and later in the Ministry of Defense before she became head of communication of the Liberal Party and Secretary General of the Liberal-Women section. She has also been active in the private sector as Head of Public Relations and Member of the Executive Board of a communication agency.