



**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Roberto Montella

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Report to the Standing Committee
2016 Winter Meeting
25 February 2016

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella

It was a great honor for me to take up my duties as Secretary General of the OSCE PA on 1 January 2016. In the 55 days since that time I have embarked on a number of initiatives to strengthen the work of the Secretariat with a view to **better support the OSCE parliamentarians**. I hereby report on the main efforts which I have undertaken.

PRINCIPLES OF WORK / LOOKING AHEAD

Since my election in Helsinki in July 2015, I have had numerous formal and informal discussions with many OSCE PA Members from different delegations who have offered their support and advice as I was about to assume my new post. Every member I have spoken to, as well as the senior leadership at the Secretariat, saw a need for modernization of our OSCE PA. All of them put forward interesting and welcome ideas on how to improve the Assembly's work. Modernizing and further improving the way the International Secretariat offers its services to the Members of the OSCE PA is therefore one of my priorities.

Change needs to be introduced carefully, respectfully and building on the existing structures. I have therefore chosen to pursue a step-by-step process which I like to call a "triple A approach." I first *assess* the situation, in particular at the Secretariat, then I *adapt* to the new environment, before I start *advancing* in a reasonable time frame. **ASSESS-ADAPT-ADVANCE.**

Underlying my work and the work of the International Secretariat are the principles of efficiency, impartiality, non-partisanship and fair play. Our Secretariat will continue to deliver top-quality service to all OSCE parliamentarians. Under my leadership, the International Secretariat will make all necessary efforts to enable the OSCE PA leadership to deliver concrete results for the end-users of OSCE "products", i.e. improving people's lives and strengthening good governance in OSCE participating States.

STRENGTHENING THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (internal focus)

Our International Secretariat in Copenhagen and Vienna is composed of highly qualified professionals. Their dedication and **flexibility** has been key to the Secretariat's successful support of OSCE parliamentarians. They have developed a degree of flexibility also because their tasks are vast and require them to wear a number of different "hats" and perform a variety of duties.

My main objective is to look ahead to the future and to introduce a **solid institutionalization** of our Secretariat based on similar administrative bases present in other international organizations. I have therefore already embarked on a process of drafting appropriate **internal staff regulations**, in consultation with the Deputy Secretary General for Finance and the Director of Administration and in co-operation with the staff, to ensure fairness, respect, stability and better long-term planning by the team in the International Secretariat.

The staff of the Secretariat from Copenhagen and Vienna participated in an intense seminar in January aimed at improving our work as a team. I believe in **team work** and feel it is my responsibility to lead, but also to motivate the staff and ensure that we all work as one team in the interest of the Assembly. Our team also continues to be supported by a strong group of dedicated Research Fellows who provide us with excellent research abilities and support. They are, and will continue to be, an integral part of our ability to deliver for parliamentarians.

Simultaneously, the International Secretariat is looking at ways to improve and modernize our delivery of services. One example: We continue to lower our printing output at our meetings in the interest of working in a more environmentally sustainable way.

CO-OPERATION WITH PARTNERS (external outreach)

Since assuming office on 1 January, I have worked to normalize and strengthen our relationship with the governmental side of the OSCE. Our Assembly, while maintaining its independence, must continue to function as a unifying body within the OSCE constellation. The various bodies and institutions of the OSCE have been created to improve the implementation of our commitments and intensified co-operation within the Organization will improve our delivery. I have therefore had regular and extensive contact with **OSCE Secretary General Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, Director of ODIHR Michael Link** and other senior OSCE officials. This open dialogue with my counterparts in the rest of the OSCE has already paid dividends through improved exchange of information and co-ordination with OSCE PA members and staff. Together with Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares and Special Representative Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, I have also had a series of meetings with a number of **Ambassadors to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna**, stressing our intention to work in a more co-ordinated and co-operative fashion to better tackle the many challenges that exist in the OSCE region.

Building on the established practice, I have also been in touch with my counterparts in other parliamentary assemblies, in particular **PACE** and **NATO PA**, and plan to continue close co-operation with them in the coming months and years.

ACTIVITIES SINCE 1 JANUARY 2016

In mid-January, during my second week of duties, I traveled to Vienna to participate in the inauguration of the **German Chairmanship of the OSCE** and the Annual Meeting of Heads of Institutions and OSCE Field Missions. The Parliamentary Assembly was represented in these meetings by our Vienna Liaison Office and several other colleagues from Copenhagen.

In late January a two-day **seminar** north of Copenhagen **focused on team-building** within the International Secretariat to kick off our internal reform processes. This was an excellent opportunity for a small team like ours – 17 people from nine countries, based in two cities – to develop improved relations and modernize working practices looking into the future.

At the end of January, I participated in a high-level OSCE PA **visit to the South Caucasus**. Our meetings in **Baku** were an important opportunity for the Assembly to clarify our actions in relation to the 2015 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, and to discuss how best we can move forward together in genuine collaboration. The visit to **Georgia** served to discuss the situation in that country ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections, and on this occasion I also signed on behalf of the President the memorandum of understanding for holding the 2016 Annual Session. Deputy Secretary General Pallares, Odile Lelarge and Stephen Paul also travelled to Tbilisi in February to personally assess preparations for our upcoming Annual Session. Work is progressing very well, and I am confident and very grateful that our Georgian hosts will provide the basis for a successful Session, where all national Delegations will be welcomed to engage in fruitful and meaningful political debates. Unfortunately, due to poor weather conditions, our planned visit to Armenia had to be postponed, but I look forward to visiting Yerevan in the near future.

In early February I joined another senior PA delegation, including the Bureau of the Third Committee, looking into the situation of **migrants and refugees**. We visited to the border crossing in **southern Serbia** and met with refugees and humanitarian workers as well as the local authorities. Such visits are a powerful opportunity to be reminded of the importance of our work, and I am happy that the Assembly is engaging so actively in discussions and concrete activities on the crisis of migrants and refugees.

Last week, together with Ambassador Nothelle, Andreas Baker and Iryna Sabashuk, I paid a visit to the **ODIHR** in Warsaw. I feel strongly that the co-operation with the ODIHR is an important asset for the Assembly, and this visit was part of my ongoing efforts to build trust and further reinforce our common work in election observation. I was impressed with the work being done at ODIHR, and believe that our improved ties will be beneficial in our common delivery of good services to the end users of the OSCE “product,” the people of the OSCE participating states.

It has been a pleasure to meet in person and to speak on the telephone with many delegations during the past seven weeks. I have met with the **Norwegian, French, German, Polish, and Swedish** delegations and look forward to receiving Members of the **Kyrgyz and UK** delegations during the coming weeks. I welcome visits by delegations to our headquarters in Copenhagen, which provide me and my team an opportunity to get to know all of our Members better, and thereby enhance our services to the Assembly.

This week I had the opportunity to meet the Speaker of the Danish Parliament and expressed our gratitude for the support Denmark is providing by hosting our International Secretariat.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND FOCUS

The work of the Secretariat for the coming months will focus on preparations for the Annual Session in July and the Autumn Meeting in Skopje.

In addition, several other major events are planned in the coming months, including at least one election observation mission, to the 20 March elections in Kazakhstan. The autumn of 2016 is expected to be a busy electoral season, with possible election observation missions in Belarus, Georgia, Russia and the United States, among others.

Delivering on these and the many other activities that we can expect in the coming year will of course require an effective and stable staff, supported by an adequate budget. In the coming months I will continue to work in close co-operation with our Treasurer to deliver a lean budget in full transparency that will ensure that we can continue to support the work of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Finally, I must underline that the Assembly is facing a very serious challenge next year. With less than 17 months away from our 2017 Annual Session, we currently have no host. In recent months we have had extensive conversations with numerous delegations to explore options, and I am hopeful that we will soon find a host for 2017 that will allow the Assembly's most important meeting to take place. Unless a parliament formally offers to host this event in the very near future, the International Secretariat will be required to explore other alternatives, but it must be noted that this will likely have very significant budgetary consequences for our Assembly. Existing budgetary resources cannot cover the costs of organizing an Annual Session without the support of a host parliament of a participating State.

Annex: List of Interlocutors

OSCE Representatives

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

OSCE Secretariat

Amb. Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General

Amb. Marcel Pesko, Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre

OSCE Office For Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR)

Michael Georg Link, Director

Jean Froehly, Senior Political Advisor/ Head of Director's Office

Jan Haukaas, Special Advisor/ Director's Representative in Vienna

Julian Jakob, Special Advisor

Alexander Shlyk, Acting Head of Election Department

Cristina Finch, Head of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department

Mirjam Karoly, Senior Adviser, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

Tatjana Peric, Adviser, Deputy Chief of CPRSI, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

Idaver Memedov, Officer, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

Omer Fisher, Deputy Head of Human Rights Department

Marcin Walecki, Head of Democratization Department

Kamila Czerwinska, Meetings Officer of Human Dimension Meeting Unit

Thomas Rymer, Head of Public Affairs Department

Permanent Council

Amb. Christian Stohal, Permanent Representative of Austria to OSCE

Amb. Galib Israfilov, Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to OSCE

Amb. Veronique Roger-Lacan, Permanent Representative of France to OSCE

Amb. Eberhard Pohl, Permanent Representative of Germany to OSCE and Chairperson of the Permanent Council

Amb. Desiree Kopmels, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to OSCE

Amb. Alexander Lukashevich, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to OSCE

Amb. Daniel Baer, Permanent Representative of USA to OSCE

Amb. Thierry Bechet, Permanent Representative of the EU to OSCE

OSCE PA Delegation Visits

Azerbaijani Delegation

Bahar Muradova, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation

Azay Guliyev, Member of Parliament, Member of Delegation, Vice-Chair of the First Committee

Members of the Azerbaijani delegation

Bulgarian Delegation

Kristian Vigenin, Member of Parliament, Deputy Head of Bulgarian Delegation

Czech Delegation

Ivana Dobesova, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation, Vice-Chair of the Third Committee

French Delegation

Alain Neri, Member of Parliament, First Deputy Head of Delegation, OSCE PA Vice-President

Georgian Delegation

George Tsereteli, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation, OSCE PA Vice-President
Members of the Georgian delegation

German Delegation

Doris Barnett, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation, OSCE PA Treasurer

Norwegian Delegation

Geir Jorgen Bekkevold, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation

Polish Delegation

Barbara Bartus, Member of Parliament, Deputy Head of Delegation
Members of the Polish delegation

Portuguese Delegation

Isabel Santos, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation, Chair of the Third Committee

Serbian Delegation

Dijana Vukomanovic, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation
Gordana Comic, Member of Parliament, Rapporteur of the Third Committee
Meho Omerovic, Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality in the Serbian Parliament

Spanish Delegation

Ignacio Sanchez Amor, Member of Parliament, OSCE PA Special Representative on Border Issues

Swedish Delegation

Kent Harstedt, Member of Parliament, Head of Delegation, OSCE PA Vice-President
Members of the Swedish delegation

Diplomatic Corps

Spiro Kastriot, Ambassador of Albania to Denmark
Artem Vladimirov, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Ukraine to Denmark
Stefano Queirolo Palmas, Ambassador of Italy to Denmark
Pol De Witte, Ambassador of Belgium to Denmark
Ian Kelly, USA Ambassador to Georgia
Malena Mart, Head of EU Office in Baku, Azerbaijan

Working Visits

Azerbaijan

Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Ogtay Asadov, Speaker of the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Artur Rasizade, Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Civil society representatives

Denmark

Pia Kjaersgaard, Speaker of the Parliament

Georgia

Giorgi Margvelashvili, President of the Republic of Georgia
David Usupashvili, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Georgia
Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia
Mikheil Janelidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Georgia
Representatives of Parliamentary Organizational Commission for the OSCE PA 25th Annual Session in Tbilisi
Civil society representatives

Serbia

Astrid Castelein, Head of Field Office, UNHCR, South Serbia
Jeffrey Bielej, South Serbia Municipal Coordinator, OSCE Mission to Serbia, Bujanovac
Authorities of refugee camp in Miratovac
Authorities of Presevo one-stop reception centre
United Volunteers, Presevo