

As prepared for delivery



Address to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

*OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva
24 November 2014
The Hague*

Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,
Fellow parliamentarians,

I would like to begin by thanking the NATO PA for giving me the opportunity to address you today on behalf of the 323 parliamentarians of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly.

We have all been shaken this year by the conflict in and around Ukraine, as the crisis has serious consequences for the wider European security landscape. Key OSCE commitments have been swept aside. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of one of the OSCE's participating States has been violated. We condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation.

The OSCE has had a central role to play in efforts to ease the cycle of violence and conflict in Ukraine. Our very purpose is to lessen divisions, reduce tensions, manage change and promote co-operation to enhance our common security.

I urge all parties to honor their ceasefire commitments strictly and to implement in their entirety the measures agreed upon in the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum. Having said that, the ball is

clearly in Russia's court. In order to move forward towards a peaceful resolution of this crisis, Russia must withdraw all forces and equipment from Ukraine and away from its border and end its support for separatist forces.

I also must comment on the recent rhetoric from Moscow stating that Ukraine should never seek NATO membership. According to 1975 Helsinki Final Act – the founding document of the OSCE – participating States “have the right to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties, including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance.” Simply put, it's up to Ukraine and no one else.

Next year the OSCE will mark 40 years since the signing of the Final Act, which significantly contributed to the end of the Cold War. The OSCE's "Helsinki +40 Process," an inclusive effort by all participating States to strengthen co-operation and promote reform, continues. The OSCE PA has its own Helsinki +40 Project, a series of seminars at top think-tanks in Russia, the United States, Sweden and Finland. The process must make the OSCE better equipped and positioned to deal with contemporary threats and challenges, foremost among them the Ukraine crisis.

Dear friends,

The OSCE is not alone in its efforts to address today's security challenges. Our parliamentary assemblies must continue to play the crucial role that we do in providing democratic legitimacy and oversight to our organizations' work and representing the voices of our people. We must continue to actively work together, as we so successfully do in monitoring elections around the world – in fact, twice in Ukraine this year.

Living in today's interlinked and globalized world we must strive to restore a sense of common purpose and security that goes beyond just blocs. Let us continue our efforts in pursuit of that end, to the benefit of the citizens whom we work for.

Thank you very much.