

Report by Mr. Ilkka Kanerva, OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediation

Winter Meeting, Vienna 23 February 2017

It was an honor for me to be appointed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's President Christine Muttonen as Special Representative on Mediation in September 2016. Hereby I am providing the first review of my work as Special Representative on Mediation.

Mediation is increasingly important and cost-effective method in addressing global security challenges and it can be effectively used in preventing, managing and resolving violent conflicts. Therefore, it is an important instrument in a toolbox for the OSCE, which is a unique organization with a comprehensive approach to security. Nevertheless, more efforts are needed in order to strengthen mediation within the organization.

The OSCE PA has stepped up its mediation related efforts in the recent years. This is clearly demonstrated in the OSCE Tbilisi Declaration in 2016 and PA's Resolution of July 2014 on the "Development of Mediation Capacity in the OSCE Area". Consequently, the establishment of the position of Special Representative on Mediation within the OSCE PA is a coherent next step and a sign of commitment from the PA in strengthening mediation efforts.

Mediation itself is a broad term encompassing various sides. The OSCE PA is best equipped to focus on qualitative aspects of dialogue facilitation and shuttle diplomacy in its mediation efforts. This is also in my focus.

The mandate of my position entrusts me to act as the primary point of contact within the PA on mediation and the conflict cycle. Since the establishment of my position in fall 2016, I have focused on three larger issues:

1. Strengthening the PA's preparedness for mediation and dialogue facilitation;
2. Enhancing co-operation between the PA and the governmental and executive sides of the organization;
3. Following developments in the international security situation, with a special emphasis on protracted and emerging conflicts, simultaneously looking for appropriate windows of opportunities to support official conflict resolution processes through parliamentary dialogue.

Strengthening PA's preparedness to mediation and dialogue facilitation

Existing structures and working procedures of the PA provide a good platform to base the mediation efforts on. However, there is great potential in using the resources better and more efficiently in order to enhance PA's role in early warning and contribute preventing, managing and resolving conflicts through parliamentary diplomacy.

Often mediation efforts conducted through parliamentary dialogue give new impetus to peace processes by reflecting fresh ideas and approaches. In order to enhance the OSCE PA's preparedness to mediation, it

is important to have continuous and active discussions about mediation focusing on the parliamentary role in it. This does not only contribute raising the profile of mediation within the OSCE PA but also help to better direct assembly`s mediation efforts.

As one concrete example of this work, I am hosting, together with the Finnish OSCE PA delegation, a side event on a topic of the Human Security Dimension in Peace Mediation in the margins of the OSCE PA Winter meeting on 23 February 2017. The objective of the event is to focus discussion on the human dimension in mediation by highlighting the most common human security needs of people living in the conflict zones. The event promotes people-centered and inclusive approaches to mediation as instruments in paving the way to sustainable peace.

In the endeavor to enhance PA`s reaction capabilities to early warning, it is important to focus on the biggest strengths of the PA. The parliamentary assembly gathers 323 parliamentarians from the OSCE participating States. It is a great asset to have invaluable knowledge and information throughout the OSCE Area. I have encouraged the parliamentarians and national delegations within the OSCE PA to timely inform me, together with the PA leadership, about developments concerning the security situation in their respective countries. This internal early warning system, if adequately utilized, helps the OSCE PA in taking informed actions as a reaction to the changing security environment.

Additionally, the ad hoc groups and special representatives of the OSCE PA play an important role in offering a platform to find new synergies in mediation within the OSCE PA.

I stand ready to coordinate actions as response to early warnings in my capacity as Special Representative on Mediation. Furthermore, the OSCE PA`s preparedness to mediation could be further enforced through professional trainings.

Mediation is a joint effort

In my mandate, I have been tasked to increase the contribution of parliamentarians to mediation activities conducted by the OSCE with a special emphasis on strengthening the ties between the PA and the governmental side of the organization. Additionally, the enhanced co-operation with the OSCE Executive structures is equally important.

As regards the mediation efforts within the OSCE PA, I have maintained active dialogue and coordination of actions with the OSCE PA Secretariat in Copenhagen as well as in Vienna. In order to coordinate plans related to the mediation work, I visited the OSCE PA Secretariat in January 2017 and informed the Secretariat and its leadership about my plans.

Successful implementation of my mandate requires a cooperative spirit. I have liaised with number of officials representing OSCE governmental side (representing the former and current OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office), its independent Institutions (such as ODIHR) as well as some field operations (SMM; OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova) on issues pertinent to the conflict cycle. My objective has been to inform the OSCE colleagues about the mediation efforts of the PA, to map mediation activities conducted by other relevant stakeholders as well as to look into possible synergies and avoid overlapping. Only by coordination of actions, we can identify situations where inter-parliamentary diplomacy could provide benefit to the joint OSCE efforts.

Additionally, I participated as a keynote speaker the OSCE Group of Friends of Mediation meeting that took place in mid-November 2016 on a topic of "Cooperation between the OSCE and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Inclusion of Women in Peace Processes". The meeting was chaired by the Finnish OSCE Representation in a co-operation with the Swiss and Turkish OSCE Representations as co-Chairs. The event offered a good venue for an open discussion about how the OSCE PA, parliaments and parliamentarians

could better share mediation-related best practices between the participating States and OSCE structures, as well as about what kind of support and institutional requirements are needed in order to lay adequate foundations for parliaments to play an effective role in mediation.

I attach great importance to the work of the OSCE Executive side, including the OSCE Secretariat, Independent Institutions as well as the OSCE Field Missions. I have been tasked to liaise with the executive side of the organization on all issues pertinent to the conflict cycle with the objective to increase the contribution of parliamentarians to mediation activities undertaken by the OSCE. Therefore, I have approached the Secretary General Ambassador Zannier as well as the Heads of OSCE Field Missions by informing them on the implementation of my mandate and inviting them to make use of my services whenever needed or felt appropriate.

Moreover, over the past months, I have had discussions with representatives of other relevant organizations dealing with mediation, such as UN and civil society organizations. We have coordinated our plans and ideas as well as looked for co-operation possibilities. Taking into consideration the limited resources in mediation worldwide, co-operation is extremely important.

The foundations for strengthening co-operation with our partners (including other OSCE Institutions, UN, civil society etc.) are now being laid and will be expanded in my future work. This co-operation has already yielded results and I am confident it is about to bring more benefits.

Following developments in the international security situation

As a part of my mandate, I have closely followed developments as regards the security situation within the OSCE area, with a special emphasis on protracted and emerging conflicts.

During the reporting period, I have followed the developments throughout the OSCE area. However, a special attention has been given to the conflict in and around Ukraine, Transdnestrrian conflict settlement process as well as the Cyprus peace talks. In the case of Ukrainian conflict, we have unfortunately witnessed increased tensions in the eastern part in the beginning of 2017. I stand ready to continue facilitating parliamentary dialogue between Ukrainian and Russian parliamentarians when seen appropriate and timely.

The Austrian OSCE Chairmanship has stated that the Transdnestrrian Settlement Process is among the priorities for the Chairmanship in 2017. Also, I am following the developments in this regards and ready to support the process if seen appropriate.

In the beginning of this year, we have witnessed some encouraging steps being taken in terms of the Cyprus Peace Talks that were held in Geneva in January. The example shown by Greek and Turkish Cypriots in putting differences aside in their attempt to find solutions to unify their country sends a positive signal not only to the people in Cyprus but also to the international community at large.

I would like to conclude my report by expressing deep appreciation for the leadership of the OSCE PA and the OSCE PA Secretariat both in Copenhagen and in Vienna. Your support to the implementation of my mandate has been invaluable and I am deeply grateful of it.