

Welcome to the 23rd Annual Session

Message from the Secretary General



Welcome to the OSCE PA's 23rd Annual Session in Baku.

Meeting in Azerbaijan – at the crossroads of Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East – is a reminder of the OSCE's historic value in building bridges across geographical, political and cultural boundaries from East to

West, North to South. With its ancient cultural heritage, I am sure that Azerbaijan will provide the perfect backdrop to our Annual Session, and with their reputation for hospitality, I am sure that our hosts will ensure that it is a memorable and enjoyable occasion.

The theme for this Session, "Helsinki +40: Towards Human Security for All," is a testament to the importance that the Assembly attaches to the upcoming 40th anniversary of the landmark 1975 Helsinki Accords, as we focus our attention on how to ensure that the spirit of Helsinki endures as we face the new challenges of the 21st century. We are grateful to our hosts for their excellent organization, and we very much look forward to fruitful and lively debates in the coming days.

Since last year's Annual Session, the Assembly has met in Budva and Vienna for timely and provocative debates on the economic crisis, multi-cultural societies, countering terrorism and respecting human rights, water management and the situation in Ukraine. We have observed elections in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Serbia, Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and, most recently, in Ukraine. Our observation mission in Ukraine was a major accomplishment, as more than 100 of the PA's elected MPs from nearly 30 OSCE participating States lent their credibility, visibility and expertise to the mission.

We are also proud to inform OSCE parliamentarians that the Assembly remains in good financial condition.

It is an honour to serve as Secretary General and to work with the exceptionally capable multinational staff of the OSCE PA in Copenhagen and Vienna. We look forward to serving you in the coming days and working together to ensure a successful meeting.



R. Spencer Oliver
Secretary General

Programme Saturday, 28 June

- 08.00 – 17.30 Registration
(Fairmont Hotel Congress Centre)
- 09.00 – 12.00 Meeting of the Standing Committee
(Grand Ballroom)
- 14.00 – 15.30 Inaugural Plenary Session
(Grand Ballroom)
Opening Remarks by OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic
Addresses by Host Officials:
- H.E. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev
- H.E. Speaker of the Milli Mejlis Ogtay Asadov
Address by OSCE CiO, Swiss Foreign Minister and President of the Confederation Didier Burkhalter
- 16.00 – 17.30 Plenary Session (Grand Ballroom)
Interventions by Speakers of National Parliaments including Speaker of the Russian State Duma Sergey Naryshkin and Ukrainian Deputy Speaker of Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Koshulynskiy
Message on behalf of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon
- 18.30 – 20.30 Dinner hosted by President Aliyev
(Heydar Aliyev Center)

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The International Secretariat will be tweeting live updates during the Annual Session using the hashtag #BakuAS. For those on Twitter, we encourage the use of this hashtag and also invite Members and staff to follow us @OSCEPA and on Facebook, www.facebook.com/oscepa. Other resources worth keeping an eye on during the Session are the Assembly's YouTube and Flickr pages (www.youtube.com/oscepa and www.flickr.com/oscepa), where videos and photos will be uploaded every day. We encourage Members and staff to share these resources through their own social networks.