



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

**Talking points to the Joint Session of the three General Committees
of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

Winter Meeting

21 February 2013

President Migliori,
President Prammer,
Ambassador Yatsiuk,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the second time I address this winter meeting, which provides an excellent platform for open dialogue on a wide range of issues on the OSCE agenda. The fact that it takes place in Vienna enables direct interaction between parliamentarians and representatives from participating states, which I believe is beneficial and necessary.

The Dublin Ministerial Council concluded with a number of positive outcomes. The OSCE Ministers committed to the Helsinki+40 process, which seeks to strengthen the OSCE's contribution to building a Security Community by the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2015. In addition, Mongolia was welcomed as the 57th participating State, the OSCE's efforts to combat transnational threats were further strengthened and participating States advanced their commitment to good governance and combating corruption, money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Yet, despite progress in these areas, the inability to reach consensus on Human Dimension decisions, including in the field of freedom of the media, underlined a continuing deficit of trust and the divergence on strategic issues among participating States. Against this background, the H+40 process aims to increase trust and renew confidence, and to ensure the OSCE's relevance in the current security environment. The first meeting of the Informal Working Group on H+40 took place on 12 February in an open and constructive atmosphere. During this meeting, participating States reiterated their commitment to address both strategic issues as well as concrete areas for further progress identified as priorities by each Chairmanship in the run up to 2015.

As the Organization embarks in the H+40 process input from parliamentarians will become particularly relevant. Together with the Chair, I will explore further opportunities for incorporating the parliamentary dimension into our debates, including by inviting some of you to the Security Days so that you can contribute to developing

new “outside the box” ideas. The Security Days bring together representatives from Track II initiatives and participating States to discuss current security issues. Having been regarded as a successful initiative last year, they will take place again this year with debates on arms control and Afghanistan (March) and on the more general security landscape in June.

I recognize the vital role played by the PA in promoting the OSCE values, principles and commitments. Through your activity, including in the field of election observation, you deliver a concrete contribution to realizing the vision of a Security Community chartered at the Astana Summit. This is also why, throughout my travel to participating States, I have continued to engage with parliamentarians and to promote their active participation in the PA, including during recent visits to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. I find these exchanges fruitful and constructive and will pursue them in the future.

However, I am deeply concerned by current divisions regarding election observation. I have said it before and will repeat it here: The OSCE needs both ODIHR’s expert-based and sustained observation efforts as well as the parliamentarian’s unique contribution and perspective. The current situation damages the OSCE’s reputation as a whole and I hope can be soon resolved on the basis of a common understanding.

As you are well aware, the 2013 budget was approved on 7 February. I have expressed concern for this delay, which costs the Organization money at a time of financial difficulties. The challenges met during the negotiations of the budget underlined existing divisions among participating States on the role and priorities of the Organization, an issue that will be addressed in the context on the H+40 process.

For its part, the Secretariat continues its efforts to respond effectively to the needs of participating States and to the increasing mandates entitled to us. In this regard, I regret the criticism voiced by representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly on the Secretariat’s budget, which I had presented and discussed with you in Tirana.

The reductions in the budget of some of the Field Operations are the result of political constraints and the modest increases to the Secretariat partially result from an effort to preserve our capacity to remain engaged in these countries. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the Secretariat continues to be tasked with additional mandates by participating States, including in areas such as combating transnational threats and enhancing the OSCE’s engagement with Afghanistan, which are largely implemented within existing resources.

At the beginning of my mandate I shared with you some initial ideas on how to make the Secretariat more efficient and responsive to the needs of the participating States. This has included efforts to operate with a high level of transparency and accountability –core values which apply to all within the Organization- and which are guaranteed through both internal and external oversight mechanisms. Through its programme of

internal audits, evaluations and investigations, the Office of Internal Oversight reports directly to me on internal control and risk management, and on the value for money and integrity of the OSCE's activities. External scrutiny is provided by the annual audit and carried out by the External Auditors and the Audit Committee, who report to the PC. We are always looking to share our experiences with others, and my staff stands ready to travel to Copenhagen to have an exchange of good practices between the two Secretariats.

Thank you for your attention, I look forward to your questions and comments.