



## **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

**Tbilisi, Georgia, Closing Plenary – 5 July 2016**

**President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland)**

Dear friends, dear colleagues,

In my two years as President, the political situation and security environment has changed dramatically in our OSCE area. The crisis in and around Ukraine continues to be one of the biggest challenges for the OSCE, and tensions have increased between East and West. Terrorism continues to claim far too many lives in our region and around the world, while migration is increasingly demanding our attention.

In these times, it is very important to recall the validity of all ten Helsinki Final Act principles, and friends we have to reaffirm these principles even as they have been put to the test lately. I believe that reviving the spirit of Helsinki requires ensuring that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly remains an Assembly that is inclusive, open and transparent.

I prepared a special paper entitled “Our common vision for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,” which has been distributed here in Tbilisi. Its focus is on a common vision and a common approach. I have been working on translating these ideas into practice and I hope that my successor will continue to do so.

In this time of uncertainty and tension in the OSCE area, it is all the more important to enhance constructive parliamentary dialogue and promote mutual understanding. We must find solutions to our challenges through political not military means. Stability can only be sustainable if based on functioning democratic institutions of which parliaments are key.

Our Assembly is a forum for inter-parliamentary international dialogue. While the name of this organization, as we all know, is the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, what we are doing now actually – and should continue to do – is to work for security through co-operation and dialogue. Security is our common goal while co-operation and dialogue are the means.

In addition to being a forum for debate, the Assembly also has an operational dimension. Our responsibility as parliamentarians is to follow through on the recommendations laid out in our

resolutions and to translate our common positions into concrete actions. This, indeed, will continue to be our biggest objective in the years to come – we need to focus increasingly on result-oriented activities. Not only talking, but acting.

Our Assembly has a distinct identity based on its values that unite us. Each and every one of us should promote our common values. There are many things we can do to help ensure that OSCE commitments are implemented in our own countries as well as at the international level. We can promote issues of common interest, including by strengthening mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We can contribute by developing the parliamentary dimension to mediation and also by promoting transparency and accountability of the OSCE.

In this regard, it is highly positive that we have so many dedicated members serving as Special Representatives and in working groups that focus on specific challenges in the OSCE area and are dedicated to ensuring that the values of the OSCE are implemented in concrete ways. Thank you very much for that valuable work. These issues include, inter alia, anti-terrorism, human trafficking, the Arctic, the Baltic Sea area, Mediterranean affairs, and gender.

One of my key priorities as President has been an effort to promote dialogue and increase contacts with the OSCE governmental side and institutions. This is an asset for both sides. The PA has worked to develop dialogue within our organization from top to bottom. Active engagement with the Chairmanship, meetings with the Director of ODIHR and close co-ordination between our Copenhagen and Vienna offices and the OSCE field missions, I believe, are the Organization's most effective way of delivering services to the people we represent.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly should continue to provide political support to the Organization's work in the field through developing co-operative relationships and through our annual declarations. Together, we can increase the OSCE's comparative advantages in the rather crowded field of international organizations and develop means for mutually strengthening each other.

I am pleased that there has been some concrete action to strengthen the Parliamentary Assembly's relationship with the OSCE's governmental side. The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, German Foreign Minister Steinmeier, and two OSCE ambassadors who addressed side events here in Tbilisi on migration and mediation are very good examples of positive co-operation.

Representatives from ODIHR also addressed parliamentarians about ODIHR's work with national parliaments. This was just the latest of many positive signs of improved co-operation between the OSCE PA and ODIHR over the years. I hope to see this trend continue, in particular within the realm of election observation, which is one of our most important activities.

There is no reason that the PA and other OSCE institutions should be in opposition to each other, but rather should co-operate and complement each other's work in the most effective and efficient way possible. In this regard, I think it is very positive that the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc

Committee on Migration is co-ordinating so closely with the OSCE's Informal Working Group on Migration. Members of the committee addressed the working group in June and the committee's chair, Filippo Lombardi, will address the Special Permanent Council meeting on migration later this month.

It is important while working closely on common issues that we also make sure that our work does not overlap.

Dear friends,

I greatly appreciate the support given to me by all our members and by the Secretariat in Copenhagen and Vienna. There is a great team spirit among the staff and the ongoing efforts of Secretary General Roberto Montella to modernize our working methods are having a very positive impact. No President will succeed without maintaining a close relationship with them – it is a whole family. Every one of us should be supporting and co-operating with our team at the International Secretariat.

And of course, I also thank you, dear colleagues for the trust you have placed in me and for the opportunity to serve as your President for the past two years.

And on behalf of the Assembly, again, my heartfelt thanks to the Georgian Parliament for all that you have done in hosting this Session and for the exceptional hospitality during the past week. A special thanks as well to the interpreters who have done an excellent job under demanding circumstances.

Dear friends, thank you very much indeed.