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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Mr. Roberto Montella

**Twenty-Sixth Annual Session
of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

MINSK, 5 – 9 JULY 2017

Report to the Standing Committee
5 July 2017

OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella

Since my last report to the Standing Committee at the Vienna Winter Meeting, the Assembly and the Secretariat have maintained a high rate of activities. The OSCE PA Secretariat has worked with partners on three extraordinary thematic seminars, we've continued preparations for future Assembly meetings in several countries, and have continued to provide support to the PA's leadership in the field of election observation as well as policy, technical and logistical advice and support to the PA's President, Committees, Special Representatives and other mandate holders. All of this comes in addition to further enhancing the Secretariat's external co-operation activities both through Copenhagen and our Vienna Liaison Office and efforts to consolidate the Secretariat's ability to perform in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner.

In the Secretariat, we have placed a particular emphasis on developing a consolidated draft of Financial Regulations to govern our financial management. This draft is being presented today to the Standing Committee for its consideration and endorsement.

I want to extend our sincere **thanks to the Parliament of Belarus** for hosting this Annual Session, and thereby providing a forum for parliamentary debate on the most pressing topics facing the OSCE region. This support by the Belarusian parliament is a critical contribution to the Assembly and to the OSCE overall, especially in times of increased austerity. The selection of the theme **"enhancing trust"** is a very timely and a well-focused choice and I sincerely hope that our Annual Session in Minsk will indeed contribute to greater trust and understanding among the participating States of the OSCE.

Strengthening the International Secretariat

As previously reported to the Standing Committee, I have prioritized in recent months the development of **Financial Regulations** to govern our internal financial management. These new Financial Regulations will provide clear rules, enhanced transparency and accountability. The clear lines of responsibility, reasonable restrictions on authorizing transfers, and clarity on extra budgetary contributions and the appointment of external auditors all provide common-sense safeguards for our financial management. In the Secretariat, we see this not only as a way to improve our accountability to OSCE parliamentarians, but as an effective management tool to further maximize the use of the limited resources we have. The development of these regulations has been undertaken in very close consultation with the Treasurer, the President and other Bureau members to ensure that the proposed Regulations fully meet the high standards that are rightly expected of the management of OSCE PA resources.

The **draft budget** presented by Treasurer Barnett also reflects some structural changes that, together with Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, I have actively encouraged. In line with our efforts at improved transparency, these changes are intended to make our financial management more foreseeable and to clarify spending priorities. The OSCE PA Bureau in April supported the adoption of both the draft budget for 2017-18 and the financial regulations, and I hope that the Standing Committee will similarly approve these two documents, thereby putting the Assembly on a strong and transparent path for our work in coming years.

We are pleased to welcome **Marco Bonabello** as our new **Liaison Officer and Advisor** in our Vienna Liaison Office, who is seconded to our Secretariat with the generous support of the Italian government. Two colleagues in the International Secretariat have also recently left the Assembly to pursue other career options. We have consequently advertised for a contracted position of Chief of Administration and Finance and a seconded position of Programme Officer. Both recruitment processes are ongoing with a view to ensuring that our support to OSCE parliamentarians remains at a high professional level. International Secretariat staff have also continued to have access to and participate in training offered by the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, including on key topics such as mediation and other elements of the conflict cycle, which help to strengthen our capacity to provide support to parliamentarians. We appreciate the services offered by the OSCE Secretariat to our team, which helps ensure that we deliver optimal support.

Activities of the International Secretariat in support of Members

In addition to providing support to the preparation of the statutory meetings and conferences organized with our partners, the International Secretariat has continued providing substantive support to the President and other Members of the Assembly.

Since the Winter Meeting in February **President Muttonen** has maintained a busy schedule working on behalf of the Assembly. In preparation for this Minsk Annual Session, the President visited **Belarus** and had substantive meetings with the country's leadership, in addition to the signing of the host agreement for our Session. The visit provided important political direction enabling continued preparation by the Secretariat in advance of the meeting. The International Secretariat also supported the President's visit to **Uzbekistan** to continue to engage that country following a long pause in our relations. This first visit by an Assembly official to the country in more than a decade was a great step forward in our co-operation. The President also paid an important visit to **Kazakhstan**, meeting with the leadership and participating in the remarkable Expo being hosted by **Astana**; this, in addition to President Muttonen's recent visit to **China**, has helped to reaffirm the Asian dimension of our work. The Secretariat has been pleased to support these efforts, as well as other activities by the President in Austria, Malta (with a focus on increased **Mediterranean** engagement of the Assembly) and at the **CIS IPA conference in Russia**.

Deputy Secretary General **Gustavo Pallares** recently led a Secretariat team to **Kyrgyzstan** in preparation for the **2018 Bishkek Autumn Meeting**. The visit provided an opportunity for high-level discussions including on the logistical and organizational aspects of the meeting, the general programme and possible dates.

The Chair of the PA's Parliamentary Team on **Moldova, Arta Dade**, supported by Loic Poulain from the Secretariat visited Chisinau and Tiraspol, encouraging the sides to follow through on their commitments and to produce concrete results in the Transdniestrian settlement process.

The Secretariat once again supported the organizing of the '**Leinsweiler Seminar**' in the Franco-German border region, convened by **Treasurer Doris Barnett**. With a focus on the renationalization of politics, it provided an excellent opportunity for members and experts to discuss in an informal manner a trend with consequences throughout the OSCE region.

In the field of **elections**, we supported a team of more than 60 parliamentary election observers deployed to **Armenia** for the 2 April parliamentary elections, under the leadership of **Ignacio Sanchez Amor** and **Geir Joergen Bekkevold**. Mr. Sanchez Amor also represented the

Assembly at a conference held in the European Parliament related to accountability of election observers, discussing the importance of non-biased and credible observation. At the moment of writing this report, we are deploying two observation missions in parallel, on 25 June in **Albania** and 26 June in **Mongolia** under the leadership of **Roberto Battelli and Marietta Tidei, and Guglielmo Picchi and Georgios Varenmos**, respectively. This means that since we met in Tbilisi for our Annual Session last year, the OSCE PA has deployed teams of observers on 12 separate occasions in addition to participating in several Needs Assessment Missions and post electoral visits to present the reports. This has considerably stretched our Secretariat's limited resources and I wish to praise my colleagues for their dedication. I also want to thank the hundreds of parliamentarians who have dedicated their time to this work which is critically important to the overall challenge of developing robust democracy across the OSCE region. At a Secretariat level, we have continued to hold meetings to **discuss with ODIHR, PACE, NATO PA and the European Parliament on how to strengthen the election observation methodology** and how to best deliver the necessary services to MPs in their capacity as election observers.

Farimah Daftary continues to support with dedication the work of the **Ad Hoc Committee on Migration**, established last year. The Committee has remained tireless in pursuing the challenges involved with the migration crisis, deploying large teams of MPs to **Greece and Turkey** recently, and I am pleased that we have been able to support this work. I look forward to seeing the report and recommendations put forward by the Committee and I wish to warmly thank the Greek and the Turkish delegations for making excellent arrangements for the Committee's visits. I hope that the ambitious work of the Ad Hoc Committee in coming up with concrete proposals for a range of actors translates into results and a real impact on the ground.

In early June, my Chief of Executive Office, Andreas Baker and myself supported and took part in a **high-level delegation to Turkey**. This served as practical and operational follow-up to the important visit of President Muttonen's delegation last August. Under Vice-President **George Tsereteli's leadership**, I believe that this visit was useful to consolidate an open dialogue on the many challenges facing the country, and I thank also **Vice-President Azay Guliyev, and Third Committee Officers Sanchez Amor and Ivana Dobesova** for their important contributions to this delegation.

Finally, Deputy Secretary General Semyon Dzakhaev and our entire team have worked to ensure a smooth implementation of the amendments made to our Rules of Procedure in Vienna. Thanks to the guidance provided by **Vice-President Lord Peter Bowness, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices**, in first adopting and then giving effect to the amended rules, I believe that this has been a successful effort. We hope that the changes will improve the functioning of the Assembly and provide more time for effective debate on priority political topics.

Co-operation within the OSCE

The Winter Meeting proved once again to be an excellent opportunity for OSCE PA interaction with other structures within the OSCE. Hearing directly from senior OSCE officials on their work is, I believe, critical for OSCE parliamentarians and we will continue to use this annual opportunity to enhance our co-operation with the OSCE's executive structures and institutions.

The OSCE PA has also continued to enjoy good co-operation and support from **OSCE field operations**. Most notably, the strong support provided to the extensive visit of Special Representative for South East Europe **Roberto Battelli and Ambassador Andreas Nothelle** to

Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina in May was another example of how our offices can work together with great effect. The **OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** also provided invaluable support to the President's successful visit to that country.

Another example of our intensified co-operation with OSCE executive structures includes **President Muttonen's recent participation in the Central Asian Regional Heads of OSCE Missions Meeting in Tashkent**. Also, to help ensure that the OSCE as a whole can deliver results as effectively as possible, when appropriate we have taken the opportunity to invite senior officials from the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and other offices to join OSCE PA delegation visits. I appreciate that senior representatives from OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier's office have joined OSCE PA delegations to Turkey on several occasions, and that Heads of OSCE field operations regularly contribute to our meetings in various countries.

In line with the Tbilisi Declaration which has tasked me **"to develop, in co-operation with the OSCE executive structures**, an action plan on how the OSCE PA and the executive structures can work more closely together" to be presented at the 2017 Autumn Meeting, I have undertaken consultations with Ambassador Zannier specifically aimed at systematizing the good level co-operation achieved to date. As I have informed you on several prior occasions, since taking office last year, pursuing improved co-operation has been a particular priority of mine and I have taken every opportunity to implement closer co-operation without delay. As a result, many elements of the called-for 'action plan' to be presented in October have already been established and implemented. In this regard, I am pleased to share with you **the exchange of letters (attached to this report) I had recently with Secretary General Zannier**, that well outlines the depth of the co-operation we have established with the OSCE Governmental dimension for the benefit of the Organization's ultimate end users – the citizens and the institutions of the OSCE participating States. Needless to say, we will continue to explore further opportunities for co-operation, and I look forward to continued dialogue with Members on how best to achieve the needed results.

This new phase of improved and enhanced relations with the OSCE also requires a recalibration and reinforcement of the already prominent role played by our Vienna Liaison Office. The OSCE PA Office in Vienna is the Assembly's primary tool for daily interaction with the OSCE Secretariat structures and the Permanent Representations of the OSCE participating States. The office is presently staffed with 5 permanent staff members in addition to a number of research fellows and interns. Staff of the office participate in OSCE meetings on a daily basis, report on activities of the OSCE Permanent Council, advocate for OSCE PA policies and decisions, and support the OSCE PA's other statutory meetings and activities. It is my intention to ensure that the Vienna Liaison Office continues to be a cornerstone in sustaining our work and particularly in the implementation of the Tbilisi Declaration and my vision of the work of the OSCE PA Secretariat.

Co-operation with Partners

President Muttonen, with the support of the Austrian Parliament, has organized **two high-level conferences** in recent months: one in Vienna that brought a focus on '**OSCE Security Policy – Female Perspectives**', and more recently in Villach, Carinthia, focused on **the role of parliamentarians promoting protection of national minorities**. Events such as these, of critical importance to OSCE work, are a key added value that partnership between the OSCE PA and national parliaments can bring. Working with parliaments in this way enables the OSCE

Parliamentary Assembly to work well beyond its limited financial and staff resources, and we welcome the added impact of such co-operation.

The OSCE PA also worked closely once again with our long-term partners in the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States to hold a **parliamentary conference on combating international terrorism, in St. Petersburg**. The strong participation by OSCE and Council of Europe parliamentarians greatly contributed to a successful and focused event. **President Muttonen's proposal to establish an ad hoc committee on anti-terrorism** is a tangible outcome from this successful conference. As the fight against terrorism is a key priority of the international security agenda, in my view it deserves to be addressed in a more structured fashion by our Assembly. Parliamentarians, with their direct connection to constituents, are well-placed to have a real impact in strengthening deradicalization efforts at grass-roots level and ensuring that anti-terrorism initiatives are undertaken in an appropriate manner. Indeed, an ad hoc committee on this topic could be instrumental to better profile our added value, develop practical means for co-operation and promote the exchange of lessons learned and best practices.

Upcoming Events

Following the summer break, we expect another busy period. In the immediate future, the Secretariat will be focused on preparations for the **Autumn Meeting in Andorra** in October. This important meeting will remain a priority for our work in the coming months, and I am pleased to report that preparations are proceeding very well.

We continue to encourage parliaments that have not yet hosted events to consider possibilities for holding future Annual Sessions and Autumn Meetings of the Assembly, enabling OSCE parliamentary diplomacy to continue effectively in future years.

We have also already begun preparations for **election observation missions** that we expect to deploy in **Germany in September and Kyrgyzstan in October**, with our Head of Administration for Election Observation, Iryna Sabashuk participating in ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission visits to ensure that we work effectively together from the beginning of our preparations.

In conclusion, I would like to **thank all my colleagues** at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen and Vienna for their dedication and outstanding work. I would also like to **thank all the members** of the Assembly for their personal connection with me and for their advice and support. I value the personal and informal relation I enjoy with members and appreciate the positive and friendly atmosphere we manage to establish every time we meet either in statutory meetings, election observations or other types of OSCE PA activities. Together with my colleagues at the Secretariat we look forward to continuing to support the work of OSCE parliamentarians in the many fields of the Assembly's activities.

THE OSCE PA INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Staff table

- Roberto MONTELLA, Secretary General
 - Gustavo PALLARES, Deputy Secretary General
 - Semyon DZAKHAEV, Deputy Secretary General
 - Andreas NOTHELLE, Ambassador, Special Representative (Vienna Liaison Office)
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- Andreas BAKER, Chief of the Executive Office
 - Marco BONABELLO, Liaison Officer and Advisor (seconded, Italy)
 - Dana BJERREGAARD, Head of Document Services
 - Marc CARILLET, Deputy Director of the Vienna Liaison Office
 - Farimah DAFTARY, Programme Officer
 - Anna DI DOMENICO, Executive Assistant (seconded, Italy)
 - Tim KNOBLAU, Executive Assistant to the Vienna Liaison Office
 - Odile LELARGE, Head of Conference Services
 - Kurt LERRAS, Senior Advisor (consultant)
 - Bo Hjorth NIELSEN, General Services Manager
 - Francesco PAGANI, Chief Political Advisor
 - Nat PARRY, Head of Communications and Press
 - Stephen PAUL, Chief, ICT Service and Support Section
 - Loic POULAIN, Presidential Advisor
 - Iryna SABASHUK, Head of Administration for Election Observation

The Secretary General

H.E. Ambassador Lamberto Zannier,
Secretary General of the OSCE
Vienna

Copenhagen, 23 May 2017

Dear Secretary General,
Dear Lamberto,

As you may recall, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Tbilisi Declaration of 2016 called upon "the Secretary General of the Assembly to develop, in co-operation with the OSCE executive structures, an action plan on how the OSCE PA and the executive structures can work more closely together". We have already implemented enhanced co-operation in a number of fields, but I take this opportunity to encourage any further suggestions from your side for improving our collective work.

Since I assumed the office of Secretary General last year, I believe that relations between the OSCE executive and parliamentary structures have strengthened significantly, building upon the existing co-operation mechanisms established in the past. As you will know from our regular communications, I decided to implement enhanced co-operation from the first day I took up my office, rather than to wait for the conclusion of the action plan called for in the Tbilisi Declaration. Nonetheless, I welcome the Tbilisi Declaration's tasking as an opportunity to consider further ways to build on our already significantly enhanced co-operation.

Just a few of the highlights in OSCE-OSCE PA co-operation that have been well established and that I think have had significant impact include the following:

- The regular consultations that you and I have had both by telephone and in person has particularly been useful in politically sensitive cases, and this improved communication has helped ensure more targeted work by the OSCE PA to support OSCE efforts, for example related to continued work by field missions.
- Presentations by the OSCE Secretary General at the OSCE PA's meetings, particularly in Winter and Autumn, is by now an established practice going back many years that I'm pleased we have consolidated. This exchange on budgetary and administrative matters, as well as on political priorities, enables OSCE parliamentarians to know more about both challenges and opportunities in OSCE work and thereby to prioritize their own contributions to our Organization.
- Regular co-ordination meetings between the Director of your Office and the OSCE PA's Special Representative and Liaison Office in Vienna, together with improved co-ordination through the OSCE PA's appointed focal point for liaison with the Secretariat, who regularly participates in your weekly OSCE policy group meetings, and other forms of co-ordination at the working level have enabled us to identify co-operation opportunities on several occasions.

- OSCE PA mandate holders, such as Special Representatives, can be effective political tools for the Organization, and keeping the OSCE PA International Secretariat fully informed on developments with OSCE executive structures enables much more effective use of these tools.
- The inclusion of OSCE PA International Secretariat representatives in activities and events organized by the executive structures (including on issues such as the conflict cycle, the Code of Conduct, mediation, legal status, trafficking, gender, etc.) has yielded important results.
- The participation by the Heads of OSCE field presences in some OSCE PA meetings has greatly contributed to awareness-raising among parliamentarians of the OSCE's critical work in the field and enabled parliamentarians to reiterate key OSCE messages also in their various bilateral contacts.
- OSCE field presence leaders have on numerous occasions expressed their strong interest to host visits by OSCE PA Members and to brief parliamentarians on their work. PA Members are keen to contribute to OSCE work, and so we welcome these opportunities to provide political support to field missions.
- Increasing exchanges between our two Secretariats in advance of high-level visits, to ensure that our work is complementary and can build on work by other parts of the Organization has been particularly effective. Informing about plans and outcomes before and after such missions helps to ensure that we deliver the best results on behalf of the full Organization.
- Increased awareness raising for OSCE Secretariat staff about the Parliamentary Assembly through OSCE PA participation in the GO Programme orientation for new OSCE staff has helped to ensure that OSCE staff are better oriented about the possibilities for interaction with OSCE parliamentarians.
- The standard posting of OSCE PA press releases on the OSCE's website has expanded the Parliamentary Assembly's public outreach and contributed interesting content to the OSCE's homepage.

Attached to this letter is a more complete list of key practices established in our co-operation, built up over many years, but I mention the above items simply to highlight the impact and potential of working closely together.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank you and your staff for enabling the progress we have achieved; by adding structures and substance to established co-operation mechanisms, I believe important value has been added. I am reassured to witness that there is a growing understanding across the Organization that these achievements are to the benefit of the entire OSCE and also form a basis for excellent co-operation between our two OSCE Institutions. As such, I hope that these already operating mechanisms can be built upon, and would welcome any further suggestions on further ways to further enhance our common work.

I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Yours sincerely,



Roberto Montella

Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Annex

Established practice of PA cooperation with the OSCE governmental side

Already when established, the OSCE PA developed close cooperation with the OSCE's governmental side. Much of this is reflected in the OSCE Rules of Procedure, some Summit/MC decisions, and exchanges of letters (for instance on the cooperation of the OSCE PA committees with the PC committees). In 1997, the OSCE Chairmanship concluded an agreement with the OSCE PA regarding PA-ODIHR cooperation during election observation, which was endorsed at the 2006 Ministerial Council Meeting in Brussels. In 2002, the Chairmanship, the OSCE Secretary General, and 14 Permanent Representatives from major participating States, met at a retreat in Salzburg, together with the OSCE PA leadership, and discussed a number of further steps to enhance cooperation. Upon their request, the OSCE PA established an Office of the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Vienna, headed by a Special Representative, mandated by the PA's Standing Committee to represent the PA in all OSCE bodies and structures at ambassadorial level. Subsequently, the newly developed OSCE Rules of Procedure included numerous provisions regarding the participation of PA representatives in OSCE meetings. Also, in Salzburg, the OSCE volunteered to make an annual presentation of the draft Unified Budget of the OSCE to the PA's Standing Committee, around the same time as the presentation to the PC takes place. In return, the PA established a committee on the OSCE budget (later replaced by a Special Representative) to follow budget issues and to comment on the draft by making recommendations. The Belgian OSCE Chairmanship formally replied to one of these letters of recommendations. In addition to these major steps, here is a list of established practice in OSCE PA cooperation with the OSCE governmental side:

A. Decision-making bodies and Chairmanship

- The CiO addresses the PA's Plenary meetings and, ideally, also the meetings of the Standing Committee/joint committees during conferences without a Plenary.
- The Chairmanship makes presentations at Bureau meetings.
- The FSC Chair, the Chair of the Mediterranean Contact Group, and the chairs of the three topical PC committees make presentations to the PA regarding their activities.
- The PA President addresses Summit meetings and the Ministerial Council after the CiO.
- The PA President addresses the PC at least once annually.
- The PA President may be invited to participate in OSCE Ministerial Troika meetings.
- CiO and PA President may undertake joint country visits.
- Members ask oral and written questions to the CiO.
- Competent PA bodies may comment on the OSCE budget.
- The Chairs of the PA committees address PC committees that have the same field of activities.
- The PA Special Representative in Vienna and his/her staff from the Vienna Office of the OSCE PA International Secretariat participate in the PC and all open-ended meetings, including ambassador-only meetings, the Advisory Committee on Management and

Finance, with the right to speak on behalf of the OSCE PA. They may comment on drafts during drafting sessions regarding PA matters, and the PA has the right to circulate documents.

- The OSCE PA Vienna Office liaises closely with the Chairmanship on all relevant matters.
- The CiO appoints, upon proposal by the OSCE PA President, a senior OSCE PA official as Special Coordinator to lead the short term OSCE election monitoring mission in countries where OSCE PA and ODIHR observe jointly, based on the 1997 Cooperation Agreement.

B. Executive Structures

- In addition to what is established practice, it is also customary that the OSCE SG illustrates key points of the draft OSCE Unified Budget of the next year to the Standing Committee of the OSCE PA at its Autumn Meeting.
- The OSCE SG makes presentations about OSCE activities and its financial situations at the PA's Annual Session and other meetings, and answers oral questions from the PA members.
- The Heads of the Executive Institutions (HCNM, RFoM, ODIHR) may be invited to make presentations to the OSCE PA, on its request. The same applies to the Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Affairs, the Special Representative and Coordinator on Combating Human Trafficking, the Gender Advisor, etc.
- Extensive Cooperation between the ODIHR and the OSCE PA in the field of election observation is governed by the 1997 Cooperation Agreement, as endorsed by MC Dec 19/06, and includes the provision of LTO reports to the PA and extensive logistical support.
- The ODIHR and the OSCE PA cooperate on Election Observation follow-up activities, including through joint missions.
- The OSCE PA and the ODIHR cooperate closely on democratization issues, especially regarding matters relevant for the role and status of Parliaments and Parliamentarians
- The Heads of OSCE field operations may be invited to make presentations to the OSCE, on its request, facilitate and participate in PA field visits, and provide the PA with relevant information, upon its request.
- The OSCE PA International Secretariat cooperates closely with the OSCE Secretariat and its units on matters in all three dimensions, regarding – in particular - Security Sector Reform/Governance, OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Affairs, Fight Against Terrorism, Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Gender (preparation of the PA's Special Representative on Gender report), and many more.
- The OSCE PA International Secretariat works closely with the OSCE Legal Advisor on matters pertaining to the Legal Status, Privileges and Immunities of the OSCE.
- The OSCE Secretariat may provide the OSCE PA International Secretariat with information in preparation for country and field visits. The OSCE PA International Secretariat also regularly provides appropriate feedback to executive structures following PA visits/meetings.
- Members of the OSCE Secretariat may be invited to join representatives of the OSCE PA for country visits.

- The OSCE provides information about and direct links to the OSCE PA, its activities, and its press releases.
- The Head of the PA International Secretariat Executive Office regularly consults with the Head of the OSCE SG Office on upcoming activities.
- The OSCE PA Vienna Office, and in particular the OSCE PA Special Representative in Vienna, liaises closely with the OSCE Secretariat. One person in the Vienna Office is appointed as direct liaison officer with the OSCE Secretariat. The staff of the Vienna Office serves as contact points for many major OSCE activities. One Vienna Office staff person participates in the weekly coordination meetings with the Secretariat.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretary General

Vienna, 6 June 2017

Dear Secretary General, *dear Roberto,*

Thank you for your letter of 23 May, in which you shared your positive assessment of co-operation between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE, which I fully concur with and support. In turn, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your personal involvement and commitment to fostering as productive as possible co-operation among all segments of the OSCE. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and have yielded concrete improvements which have already paid off in terms of the Organization's overall effectiveness and impact. In addition to your impetus, I also understand from my colleagues that day-to-day communication between our Secretariats has been marked by a distinct improvement in both quantitative and qualitative terms. I sincerely hope that this positive pattern will continue in the years to come since ultimately it benefits the whole of the OSCE.

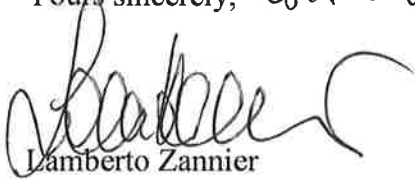
I would also like to commend your efforts to promote the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE, which engages the legislative branch of government in our work. I firmly believe that the Parliamentary Assembly is a crucial element of the OSCE and that its unique potential should be exploited to the fullest. Only through a co-operative approach can we try to counter challenges to democracy throughout the OSCE area.

H.E. Roberto Montella
Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Copenhagen

Also on behalf of my colleagues from other executive structures, I can assure you that we all value the Parliamentary Assembly as an important member of our big OSCE family.

I sincerely hope that the positive pattern of co-operation that you have successfully created in the Organization will continue. I am sure that my colleagues will continue to appreciate your efforts and support even closer co-operation in the future.

Yours sincerely, *with best regards,*



Lamberto Zannier