



OSCE PA
BERLIN 7–11 July 2018

27th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

SC (18) SGR E
Original: English

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Roberto Montella

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

BERLIN, 7-11 July 2018

Report of the Secretary General
of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Roberto Montella
Berlin, July 2018

We gather in Berlin following an exceptionally busy Spring in which the International Secretariat has been active in 18 different countries across the OSCE and beyond, supporting Assembly activities. This fact alone – that within just **over four months our small staff of 19 people have worked in one third of OSCE countries** – is a clear indication of the increasing interest and need for work by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its Secretariat. The OSCE PA team in Copenhagen and Vienna is motivated, engaged and pleased to be able to support and contribute to these efforts.

This high level of activities brings added visibility to the work of the OSCE, increased relevance and most importantly, concrete impact in the daily life of the end users of the OSCE product – the citizens of the OSCE participating States. At a time of uncertainty on so many fronts, **I'm impressed and grateful that OSCE parliamentarians are willing to dedicate their time and effort to promoting the OSCE** and dialogue-based approaches to the challenges all of our countries and societies face. It is precisely at times of uncertainty that principles and commitments are of greatest importance, so it is timely and highly relevant that this Berlin Annual Session will focus our attention on “**Implementing OSCE Commitments: The Role of Parliaments**”.

Activities of the International Secretariat in support of Members

Since the Assembly last met in Vienna in February, some 200 parliamentarians have offered their time and expertise by participating in **election observation missions**. The important leadership that parliamentarians provide has helped the OSCE to build and maintain great respect and credibility in this endeavour. It is particularly noteworthy that two of the four elections we have observed since our Winter Meeting were snap elections and not foreseeable in February. Our ability to **quickly mobilize** efforts and deploy such **professional missions** is a great strength of the Assembly, and I believe that this **flexibility is an important asset** to be maintained.

Our limited observation mission to the 4 March parliamentary elections in **Italy** was ably led by Vice-President **Margareta Cederfelt**. This mission – our first in Italy – is the fifth time in recent years that we have observed elections in the European Union, and was another clear demonstration of the Assembly's equal treatment of all countries - **no double standards here!** Our observation missions to **Russia** in March and **Azerbaijan** in April benefited from strong leadership by **Michael Link and Marietta Tidei, and Nilza de Sena and Margret Kiener Nellen**, respectively. Most recently, **Ignacio Sanchez Amor and Peter Osusky** led our observers in **Turkey** just a few weeks ago, with Sanchez Amor paying two visits to the country and even seizing the opportunity to meet with one Presidential candidate in prison. Each mission presented a range of challenges both for our observers, and the supporting Secretariat experts, and I hope that the conclusions of the missions form a good basis for constructive work in the future for each observed country.

President George Tsereteli has also maintained an exceptionally busy schedule in recent months, working tirelessly to represent the Assembly across the OSCE region. His visit to **Berlin** in March, when the formal agreement to host this Annual Session was signed together

with the **President of the German Bundestag Wolfgang Schaeuble**, served as an important opportunity to sincerely express the Assembly's **great appreciation to Germany for hosting our meeting**. The level of welcome, which included words of appreciation for the work of the OSCE PA by Bundestag President Schaeuble, in the presence of Chancellor Angela Merkel, was another demonstration of the high standing of our Assembly. The German parliament has gone well beyond what could be expected to welcome the OSCE PA this summer, and our Secretariat's conference team under the leadership of Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares together with Head of Conference Services Odile Lelarge has appreciated the opportunity to work so closely with the professional Bundestag team. These communal efforts will no doubt result in an excellent forum for OSCE parliamentarians to engage in their critical work.

The President has also continued to represent the Assembly through high-level visits to a number of OSCE countries. In recent months, President Tsereteli has visited and held meetings in **Albania, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Poland, Spain, Ukraine and the United Kingdom**, holding meetings at the highest levels of government and parliament. In each country, he took the opportunity to reiterate the strong contribution that the OSCE can have in a country, but also stressed **the common ownership of the Organization; all OSCE countries are both beneficiaries and contributors to the Organization**, he has noted. The visits to Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine particularly served as opportunities to learn about the **excellent work being done by OSCE field missions** in these countries, with the President also participating in the OSCE's Regional Heads of Mission meeting in Bishkek. For the **visit to Ukraine**, which included extensive fact-finding on the contact line in Donbas, the President's delegation included former OSCE PA President and current Special Representative on Mediation, **Ilkka Kanerva**; the Chair of our human rights and humanitarian affairs committee, **Ignacio Sanchez Amor**; and Special Representative on Eastern Europe, **Kent Harstedt**, with Members particularly highlighting the dire humanitarian situation caused by the ongoing conflict.

Our Secretariat has also continued to support the critical work being done by Members of some of the Assembly's most active bodies, namely the ad hoc committees focused on migration and on countering terrorism. Under the leadership of **Makis Voridis**, the **Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism** paid a very **substantive visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina** in early June to learn about and discuss regional challenges in countering terrorism and violent extremism. On-site visits to several cities, as well as a prison where convicted terrorists are incarcerated enabled Members to get better acquainted with terrorism-related threats at the local level and rehabilitation efforts. The PA's **Migration Committee** has also been active in South East Europe, with committee Chair **Nahima Lanjri** leading a **delegation to Serbia** to particularly examine aspects related to the plight of unaccompanied minors. The Secretariat has been working to ensure through these visits that Members gain concrete and usable experience, and we hope to be able to continue our support to these critical activities.

Strengthening the OSCE PA's functioning

The increasing number of activities outside of our statutory meetings, and the exceptionally high participation rate in our activities is a clear sign of good **health of the Assembly**. With the many duties that parliamentarians have, this is a strong vote of confidence in our work that participation in our various activities is so high.

The increasing activities by Assembly Members of course comes with a **need for additional resources** for the Secretariat. It is noteworthy that the International Secretariat is much smaller than that of other interparliamentary assemblies and works on a much smaller budget. This year's draft budget, prepared in close co-operation with Treasurer Doris Barnett, therefore includes a request for increased resources to **better support the work of the newly established Ad Hoc Committees, the general increase in activities, to strengthen and expand the young assistantship programme, as well as to ensure full adherence to the Staff Rules and Regulations**. It is my hope that this necessary increase will provide the Secretariat with adequate resources to continue the same high level of services to parliamentarians amidst our ever-increasing activities. I want to once again extend our **thanks** to the **Danish parliament and the Austrian government** for their continued support to our Assembly by **hosting our offices**, as well as **the Italian and German governments** for the support to our team through **secondments**. These contributions – above and beyond their regular financial contribution to our budget – makes a big difference to the Secretariat's ability to deliver our work at such a low cost.

The International Secretariat also continues to support work by Members to consider changes in how the Assembly's work is best conducted. As the Assembly leadership, including President Tsereteli and Vice-President Peter Bowness, looks at any changes that may help the Assembly to better deliver on our key responsibilities, the Secretariat will provide input on practical implementation as well as historical context. Whether related to technical issues related to internal communication, to publicity work, or to structural changes to our meeting programmes, we will endeavour to implement the Assembly's will.

Another field in which the additional interest in OSCE PA activities is having an impact on our work is the increasing requests for participation by outside groups in our meetings and the organization of **additional events** on the periphery of these meetings. While I see this as a positive sign of interest, the International Secretariat must focus efforts on organizing our core activities. We have noted that participation by representatives of some **non-governmental organizations** has recently caused controversy in both the Assembly and the wider OSCE. It is neither appropriate, given the Secretariat's neutral character, nor practical for the Secretariat to be involved with helping outside groups wanting to arrange events in conjunction with our meetings to lobby or advocate particular policies. Within the restrictions of the particular venue in which we hold our meetings, the Secretariat will continue to provide access for outside individuals to participate in our meetings **upon request by Members of the OSCE PA, who assume full responsibility for guests' participation**.

The International Secretariat has taken good note of the **European Union's General Data Protection Regulation** which came into effect recently. While there is an exemption for international organizations, as this regulation has impacted many OSCE participating States, we are **in close contact with the OSCE's executive structures to align regarding any application** it may have for the OSCE and our Parliamentary Assembly. If there are to be any changes in our operating methods as a result of this consultation, the Secretariat will of course communicate this to all delegations in a timely fashion. Delegations can rest assured that any information regarding our Members which national delegations provide us with is used and stored for the purposes of the Assembly's work within its mandate and decisions only, and that we do not disseminate this information to any outsiders.

In the interests of continued improvements in all of our delivery of services, we continue to pursue **training opportunities for Secretariat staff** and to work closely with colleagues

throughout the OSCE system. Such opportunities help us to make effective use of the entire Organization's resources.

Co-operation within the OSCE and with partners

I am pleased that we have continued to broaden and deepen our co-operation with other OSCE offices, in line with Members' stated desire for increased collaboration within the Organization. We have also continued expanding co-operation with other organizations, and partnering with parliaments to hold events to complement the Assembly's regular work.

In March **President Tsereteli paid a visit to Warsaw**, where he not only met with Members of the **Polish parliament and Delegation Headed by Barbara Bartus**, but also met with **ODIHR Director Ingibjorg Gisladdottir and her team**. With ODIHR, we examined a number of areas for further synergies, beyond our already close co-operation in election observation; in each mission this year, we have collaborated closely with observers deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR. This has included **PA staff attending several ODIHR Needs Assessment Missions (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Turkey, USA)** ensuring that we work closely from the very inception of a mission. The ODIHR methodology in election observation, when combined with the political experience of parliamentarians, is the best tool we have in the international arena to ensure impartial and professional assessments and it is in the interest of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's leadership to strengthen this methodology and safeguard its credibility. We benefit from strong partnerships in this field based on extensive strong collaboration, and as recent missions have also identified a number of areas in which we can collectively improve our observation work, I look forward to continuing our dialogue and reflection, together ODIHR as well as our partners in PACE, NATO PA and the European Parliament, on how to further strengthen and improve our common delivery.

Many OSCE parliamentarians also participated in the **Lisbon Conference focused on cybersecurity and digital resilience**, organized by the Portuguese Delegation headed by **Vice-President Isabel Santos**. Partnering on specific projects with national delegations is an excellent way for the OSCE PA to continue our dialogue outside of our statutory meetings in an effective and targeted manner. Similarly, the discussions held in the **Silk Road Support Group** conference, organized by the parliament of Azerbaijan under the leadership of **Bahar Muradova and Vice-President Azay Guliyev** and with the participation of a large group of OSCE PA Members will hopefully feed into our discussions on transport and economic development in the Berlin Session. **Our Second Committee Chair, Nilza Sena** also shared OSCE PA experience in this field in a key preparatory meeting for the **OSCE's Economic and Environmental Forum**, focusing her remarks particularly on the need to promote good public and corporate governance.

Members of our **Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism** have also remained active in working with other international fora, with Chair **Makis Voridis** and several other Members sharing PA expertise in a major conference **in Rome** organized by the Italian OSCE Chairmanship focused on foreign terrorist fighters. **Ignacio Cosido** also participated in a regional workshop on criminal justice actors in counter terrorism, held in **Malta**, with Marco Bonabello from our Vienna Liaison Office also applying his experience in working with the committee, moderating a session of the workshop on community involvement in counter-terrorism.

Special Representative on Eastern Europe Kent Harstedt, and our Chief Political Advisor Francesco Pagani travelled to **Brussels** in March to continue interaction with the European Parliament and its delegation for **relations with Belarus**. Close collaboration with other international parliamentary bodies is an important way for us to ensure that the OSCE PA's work is effectively targeted, and so I was also pleased to participate in the **Plenary Session of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in St. Petersburg** in April. Similarly, in Copenhagen I once again hosted a meeting with the **Secretaries General of the Council of Europe and NATO parliamentary assemblies, Wojciech Sawicki and David Hobbs**. These regular meetings enable us to better co-ordinate our work in the interests of the parliamentarians that we collectively work with.

Our co-operation with other OSCE bodies has reached an excellent level. There is continuous, close and fruitful co-operation between our **Vienna Liaison Office** and the executive side of the Organization, which includes the OSCE decision-making bodies, its informal structures, the OSCE Secretariat, Vienna-based institutions and the permanent representations of participating States. The active participation of our Special Representative, Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, and all the staff of the Office in all OSCE activities in Vienna makes the PA an integrated part of the daily work of the OSCE structures there. In addition, PA participation in, for example, Regional Heads of Mission meetings has now become a regular occurrence, with President Tsereteli leading our participation in the Central Asian meeting recently. We will continue to use these meetings as a useful opportunity to identify ways that the PA can work with and support OSCE field work. We were also very pleased to recently host a visit of **Lukas Parizek, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, in preparation for their OSCE chairmanship next year**. This visit, so early in their preparations for the 2019 Slovak chairmanship, I take as a clear recognition of the interest for deepening co-operation and a sign of appreciation for the OSCE PA's work.

Upcoming events

Following the Berlin Annual Session, our Vienna Liaison Office will again communicate in a targeted manner the various recommendations called for by the Assembly. As the OSCE governmental side begins to mobilise and prepare for the 2018 OSCE Ministerial Council in December, we will work to make sure that recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly are well taken into account by foreign ministries.

The autumn of 2018 promises to be a time of very high activity for the Assembly. Preparations are very well advanced for the **Autumn Meeting to be held in Bishkek** in early October – we look forward to this, our first major meeting in Kyrgyzstan, and I am confident it will be a successful conference. Bureau Members will also gather on the eve of the December **OSCE Ministerial Council in Milan**, which will serve as an opportunity to consider activities for the coming year.

We anticipate a busy **election observation season** and are already in the stages of planning observation missions for the 7 October general elections in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the 6 November midterm elections in the **United States**, as well as expected elections in **Georgia** and **Moldova**. Further information about these expected elections will be communicated in the near future to enable forward planning for all OSCE PA delegations.

Looking further ahead, the Assembly is in an excellent position for 2019, with our Annual Session scheduled to take place in **Luxembourg** in early July, and the Autumn Meeting

expected to take place in **Marrakesh**. We are very pleased that the Assembly has the opportunity to hold this, our first statutory meeting in a partner state, and see this as another way to strengthen our ties with OSCE partner countries. We also look forward to an Autumn Meeting in Spain in 2020, and our Annual Session in **Bucharest** in 2021. The Secretariat has been actively discussing with other delegations possible venues for other upcoming meetings, and I hope that additional countries will similarly come forward with invitations. Hosting of our meetings is a major contribution to Assembly work and is of critical importance for enabling our interparliamentary dialogue to continue.

The International Secretariat's work is a team effort, and I want to thank each and every member of the Secretariat team in Copenhagen and Vienna for your dedicated work. We look forward to continuing our support to all OSCE parliamentarians in the many fields that the Assembly is active. Each one of our activities serves as a reminder to me of the important work that our organization does, and it is a genuine pleasure for myself and the Secretariat to support parliamentarians as they put their expertise at the service of all OSCE citizens.

ANNEX I:

**OVERVIEW OF OSCE PA INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT –
INTERNAL STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

THE OSCE PA INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT:

- Roberto MONTELLA, Secretary General
- Gustavo PALLARES, Deputy Secretary General
- Semyon DZAKHAEV, Deputy Secretary General
- Andreas NOTHELLE, Ambassador, Special Representative (Vienna Liaison Office)
- Marieta SAMAC, Chief, Administration and Finance

- Andreas BAKER, Chief of the Executive Office
- Marco BONABELLO, Liaison Officer and Advisor
- Dana BJERREGAARD, Head of Document Services
- Marc CARILLET, Deputy Director of the Vienna Liaison Office
- Farimah DAFTARY, Programme Officer
- Anna DI DOMENICO, Executive Assistant
- Tim KNOBLAU, Executive Assistant to the Vienna Liaison Office
- Odile LELARGE, Head of Conference Services
- Kurt LERRAS, Senior Advisor
- 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

MANAGEMENT

- Roberto MONTELLA, Secretary General
- Gustavo PALLARES, Deputy Secretary General
- Semyon DZAKHAEV, Deputy Secretary General
- Andreas NOTHELLE, Ambassador, Special Representative (Vienna Liaison Office)
- Marieta SAMAC, Chief, Administration and Finance

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

- Andreas BAKER, Chief of the Executive Office
- Marco BONABELLO, Liaison Officer and Advisor
- Farimah DAFTARY, Programme Officer
- Anna DI DOMENICO, Executive Assistant
- Francesco PAGANI, Chief Political Advisor
- Nat PARRY, Head of Communications and Press
- Loic POULAIN, Presidential Advisor
- Iryna SABASHUK, Head of Administration for Election Observation

Election Observation Department

- Iryna SABASHUK, Head of Administration for Election Observation
- Loic POULAIN, Support
- Anna DI DOMENICO, Support
- On a rotating basis all staff are involved in election observation missions

Presidential Activities

- Loic POULAIN, Presidential Advisor
- Farimah DAFTARY, Support
- Francesco PAGANI, Support

Press and Communications

- Nat PARRY, Head of Communications and Press
- Stephen PAUL, Support
- Loic POULAIN, Support

ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

- Marieta SAMAC Chief, Administration and Finance
- Stephen PAUL, Chief, ICT Service and Support Section / Accounting Officer
- Dana BJERREGAARD, Head of Document Services
- Marc CARILLET, Deputy Director of the Vienna Liaison Office
- Tim KNOBLAU, Executive Assistant to the Vienna Liaison Office
- Odile LELARGE, Head of Conference Services
- Kurt LERRAS, Senior Advisor

Conference Services

- Odile LELARGE, Head of Conference Services
- Kurt LERRAS, support

Document Services

- Dana BJERREGAARD, Head of Document Services
- Farimah DAFTARY, Support
- Tim KNOBLAU, Support
- Iryna SABASHUK, Support

Information Technology

- Stephen PAUL, Chief, ICT Service and Support Section

Research Assistants Programme

- Iryna SABASHUK, Programme Manager
- Marco BONABELLO, Program Manager (Vienna)
- Dana BJERREGAARD, Support
- Marc CARILLET, Support

VIENNA LIAISON OFFICE

- Andreas NOTHELLE, Ambassador, Special Representative
- Marco BONABELLO, Liaison Officer and Advisor
- Marc CARILLET, Deputy Director of the Vienna Liaison Office
- Tim KNOBLAU, Executive Assistant to the Vienna Liaison Office
- Francesco PAGANI, Chief Political Advisor

STATUTORY ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

General Committee on Political Affairs and Security

- Gustavo PALLARES, Director
- Loic POULAIN, support
- Andreas NOTHELLE, Member of the Vienna PC based FSC and 1st Committee

General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

- Semyon DZAKHAEV, Director
- Nat PARRY, support
- Marco BONABELLO, Member of the Vienna PC based 2nd Committee

General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

- Andreas BAKER, Director
- Farimah DAFTARY, support
- Marc CARILLET, Member of the Vienna PC based 3rd Committee

Sub-Committee on Rules of Procedure and Working Practices

- Semyon DZAKHAEV, Director
- Andreas BAKER, Support
- Iryna SABASHUK, Support

Counter-terrorism

- Marco BONABELLO, Programme Manager
- Farimah DAFTARY, Support
- Loic POULAIN, Support

Migration

- Farimah DAFTARY, Programme Manager
- Marco BONABELLO, Support
- Loic POULAIN, Support

Belarus

- Francesco PAGANI, Programme Manager
- Farimah DAFTARY, Support

Moldova

- Loic POULAIN, Programme Manager
- Farimah DAFTARY, Support

Gender Issues

- Gustavo PALLARES, Programme Manager
- Marc CARILLET, Support

South East Europe

- Andreas NOTHELLE, Programme Manager
- Francesco PAGANI, Support
- Marc CARILLET, Support

Mediterranean

- Gustavo PALLARES, Programme Manager
- Marc CARILLET, Support
- Marco BONABELLO, Support
- Anna DI DOMENICO, Support
- Loic POULAIN, Support

Central Asia

- Farimah DAFTARY, Programme Manager
- Gustavo PALLARES (ad interim), Support
- Andreas BAKER (ad interim), Support

South Caucasus

- Andreas BAKER, Programme Manager
- Iryna SABASHUK, Support

Ukraine

- Andreas NOTHELLE, Programme Manager
- Iryna SABASHUK, Support
- Francesco PAGANI, Support

OSCE PA INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT



Secretary General
Roberto Montella

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Roberto Montella, and has a permanent staff of 19, including four staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Deputy Secretary
General
Semyon Dzakhaev



Special
Representative
Andreas Nothelle



Chief of the
Executive Office
Andreas Baker



Head of Document
Services
Dana Bjerregaard



Liaison Officer and
Advisor
Marco Bonabello



Deputy Director of the
Vienna Liaison Office
Marc Carillet



Programme Officer
Farimah Daftary



Executive Assistant
Anna Di Domenico



Executive Assistant to
the Vienna Liaison
Office
Tim Knoblaue



Head of Conference
Services
Odile Lelarge



Senior Advisor
Kurt Lerras



Chief Political
Advisor
Francesco Pagani



Head of
Communications
and Press
Nat Parry



Chief ICT
Stephen Paul



Presidential Advisor
Loic Poulain



Head of
Administration
for Election
Observation
Iryna Sabashuk



Chief of
Administration
and Finance
Marieta Samac