

Report by Mr. Ilkka Kanerva, OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediation

26th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Minsk, 5-9 July 2017

In September 2016, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Christine Muttonen appointed me as Special Representative on Mediation. The appointment followed the adoption of resolutions at the Annual Sessions in Baku 2014 as well as in Tbilisi 2016, which underlined the “importance of mediation and dialogue facilitation in the peaceful settlement of disputes” and welcomed “the strengthening of the role of the OSCE PA in that regard”.

The mandate of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Special Representative on Mediation covers:

- To act as the primary point of contact within the PA on mediation and the conflict cycle;
- To coordinate the PA's efforts and activities aimed at strengthening the PA's preparedness for mediation and dialogue facilitation;
- To present concrete initiatives and activities as a follow-up to the OSCE PA Resolution on the Development of Mediation Capacity in the OSCE area adopted in Baku in 2014;
- To follow developments in the international security situation, with a special emphasis on protracted and emerging conflicts;
- To liaise with the OSCE, its independent Institutions and field operations on all issues pertinent to the conflict cycle;
- To increase the contribution of parliamentarians to mediation activities conducted by the OSCE with a special emphasis on strengthening the ties between the PA and the governmental side of the organization;
- To liaise with other international organizations dealing with mediation issues, promoting the role of parliamentary diplomacy in conflict prevention and resolution;
- To report to the President on all activities in a timely manner and to present a report to the Assembly and its Standing Committee as needed.

Hereby I am providing the second review of my work when acting as the primary point of contact within the Parliamentary Assembly on mediation and the conflict cycle.

Over the last years, **mediation has turned out to be effective mean to resolve, manage and prevent conflicts in terms of costs and results.** There is a lot of evidence to prove that likelihood of a long-term reduction of tension is much higher for mediated conflicts or potential conflicts than in cases where mediation has not been used. The international community, and the OSCE in particular, has started to emphasize mediation especially as a conflict prevention mechanism that preserves lives and livelihood as well as keep countries on their sustainable growth paths. As the existing toolbox of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly shows, the Assembly has useful instruments to provide added-value to conflict prevention and early actions.

Based on my mandate, I have strived **to strengthen assembly's preparedness for mediation and dialogue facilitation by enhancing the use of PA's existing resources** during the reporting period. Given that the Parliamentary Assembly consists of 323 members of parliaments throughout the OSCE area, I have encouraged colleagues in the Assembly to inform me and the leadership of the Assembly, about possible changes in the security situation in their respected countries. This internal early warning system, if adequately utilized, helps the OSCE PA in taking informed actions as a reaction to the changing security environment and act accordingly. This is especially important when we are witnessing a decrease in the OSCE field presence, of which the most recent example comes from Armenia where a closure of the OSCE field operation is ongoing due to lack of agreement on its mandate.

Additionally, one way to enhance the PA's preparedness for mediation and dialogue facilitation is to **raise the profile of mediation and increase the understanding of parliamentarians on mediation**. For instance, relevant seminars and brainstorming events can serve this purpose well. Therefore, I hosted, together with the Finnish delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, a side-event under a topic of *"The Human Security Dimension in Peace Mediation"* in the margins of the Assembly's Winter meeting in Vienna. The seminar was an excellent opportunity to bring together representatives from both the parliamentary and governmental side of the OSCE as well as our colleagues from relevant partner organization, PACE and the Red Cross in particular. The seminar gathered together approximately 70 persons and provided a fruitful platform for a lively discussion on the needs of people living in conflict zones as well as on the ways to better promote human rights and security throughout the conflict cycle in order to pave the way to sustainable peace.

During the reporting period, I have attended in-depth discussions on the challenges and opportunities of mediation today and future by **taking part in mediation related events**. I would like to mention as an example a seminar on a topic of *"the OSCE – Mediator"* which was organized in May in Helsinki by Wider Security Network (WISE). I gave my contribution by delivering a keynote speech in the seminar.

The mandate of the Special Representative on Mediation includes **following developments in the international security situation and presenting concrete initiatives and activities as a follow-up to the OSCE PA Resolution on the Development of Mediation Capacity in the OSCE area adopted in Baku in 2014**. During the reporting period, I have continued to follow developments in the international security situation, with a special emphasis on protracted and emerging conflicts within the OSCE area. In order to identify cases in which inter-parliamentary dialogue could support and play a complementary role to the official conflict settlement process, I have held discussions with high-level representatives, such as of Ukraine (Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze) and the Republic of Moldova (Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Andrei Galbur) whom I would cordially like to thank for invaluable discussions.

I attach great importance to the work of the OSCE Executive side, including the OSCE Secretariat, Independent Institutions as well as the OSCE Field Missions, and therefore want to encourage the OSCE to give all the needed resources and support for their work. During the reporting period, I have **liaised with the OSCE Secretariat, the OSCE PA Secretariat as well as with the OSCE Field Operations on issues pertinent to the conflict cycle**. In order to make better use of contributions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in developing more effective responses to emerging crisis and conflict situations, I have invited the OSCE Secretariat and all the Heads of the OSCE Field Operations to make use of my services when seen needed.

Additionally, as **the crises in and around Ukraine** has remained among the top priorities on the OSCE agenda, I have maintained active contacts with the SMMU in order to better assess the security situation in Ukraine.

As a last point of my report, I would like to highlight **inclusiveness as a key element to increase effectiveness of mediation**. I believe that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's mediation and dialogue facilitation efforts can be further strengthened by taking inclusiveness systematically into account in our work, throughout the whole conflict cycle.

Inclusiveness in mediation covers different, yet equally important factors such as youth, civil society and gender perspectives. I would like to emphasize **gender equality and participation of women** as a concrete element that the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly could push forward in its objective to increase effectiveness of mediation. More women are needed in mediation work. Yet, inclusive mediation is not only about the number of women involved in peace processes. It is also about enlarging the influence of women in decision-making.

Women's participation is based on international norms and universal human rights. Additionally it has a practical dimension. Women's engagement makes mediation efforts more efficient and effective, and ultimately peace more sustainable. Unfortunately, despite of all the existing commitments, women continue to be under-represented in peace processes today.

I am pleased to inform that the OSCE Special Representative on Gender, Dr Hedy Fry, in a cooperation with me, has prepared a supplementary item on gender inclusive and responsive mediation to be debated and hopefully accepted in the 26th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Hereby, I would like to thank Dr. Fry for her invaluable work in preparing the supplementary item. The Item contains a list of important and meaningful actions and recommendations to be taken into account in the OSCE's mediation work. I believe that by embracing the gender perspective, we are not only able to make the outcomes of mediation efforts more sustainable but also improve the effectiveness of mediation in general.

I would like to conclude my report by expressing high appreciation for the leadership of the OSCE PA and the OSCE PA Secretariat both in Copenhagen and in Vienna. Your support to the implementation of my mandate is invaluable and I am deeply grateful of it.