



**Remarks by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria)**

2017 Autumn Meeting in Andorra,

Opening Session, 3 October 2017

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Good afternoon colleagues and welcome distinguished guests,

Let me express my thanks to you, Speaker Vicenç Mateu Zamora and Prime Minister Antoni Martí Petit for being here today.

I would also like to thank the Head of the Andorran Delegation, Meritxell Palmitjavila Naudi, as well as the Mayor of Andorra la Vella, Conxita Marsol Riart, who initiated the idea of holding the Autumn Meeting here while she was in parliament.

It is a real pleasure to gather for our 16th Autumn Meeting in this beautiful country, which is actually the second time that the Assembly meets here, having held our 2007 economic conference here as well. We thank you again for your hospitality.

Beyond its striking natural beauty, Andorra reminds us of the value of good neighborly relations, with its borders intact and unchanged since 1278. This is an impressive feat on a continent historically known for constantly changing borders and ever-shifting alliances.

And not only does Andorra have some of the oldest borders in Europe, but also one of the oldest parliaments, with the Consell de la Terra established all the way back in the 15th century.

Andorra also reminds us that within the OSCE, all countries – big and small – share the same equal voice in the affairs that affect us all. Equality of rights between OSCE participating States is a founding principle of this Organization, and we are determined to always co-operate in upholding principles of sovereign equality for all of our countries.

The OSCE PA Autumn Meeting comes just three months after our Annual Session. It therefore offers a useful opportunity for us to follow up on our work and recall the recommendations we have made as we set the agenda for the months ahead. This year's Autumn Meeting is about new security challenges and new tasks.

This week we will explore challenges related in particular to cybersecurity, climate change and education. These are all important issues that deserve in-depth discussion, and more importantly, action.

As we speak on these topics, as we share best practices with one another, we should also remember our own abilities as parliamentarians to put those best practices into action.

I am pleased that tomorrow we have a full session devoted to addressing climate change. It is reassuring to know that despite continued skepticism by some towards the scientific consensus on climate change, we in the international community continue to tackle this issue head on.

We are currently in the middle of the most active Atlantic hurricane season in recent memory, which has been tragically impacting communities in the Caribbean, Texas and Florida.

Although skeptics are always quick to point out that no particular storm can be definitively linked to climate change, it is clear that storms are increasing in their frequency and intensity, delivering more rain, stronger winds and more devastation. This is consistent with what scientists have warned us for decades.

Not only do we get stronger storms with climate change, but also rising sea levels, intensified heat waves, droughts and forest fires. We are seeing all of these trends play out in front of our eyes, and these are all security issues.

So we must continue to push back on this and insist instead that we pursue policies that prioritize clean energy projects, investment and innovation to promote environmentally friendly economic growth.

We also must insist that all OSCE countries ratify the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change and – more importantly – to fulfill their obligations under the agreement.

This is something that we cannot afford to compromise on.

In today's world a nation's interests are very closely interlinked with those of others, which means: whenever a country declares that it is pursuing only its own interests without taking into account other countries, it is in fact undermining all of our interests.

Co-operation is a necessity in this interconnected world, and no country – no matter how big it may be – can afford to ensure its security on its own.

Instead, we must promote dialogue and compromise, engage with each other, widen our perspective and search for common ground. This is how we build confidence and address our security challenges together.

Dear colleagues,

The OSCE has always had a pioneering broad concept of comprehensive security based on three distinct but interrelated dimensions: the political-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, and the human dimension.

Although this concept of security was developed more than four decades ago when the Helsinki Accords were written, we have really seen in the past ten years how insightful and accurate this concept is.

From the global financial crisis of 2007 and 2008 to the sovereign debt crisis and the related political crises; from climate change, conflicts and the refugee crisis; from human rights abuses, radicalization and terrorism we know that all of these issues are related and that none of them can be tackled alone.

While we have shown that the OSCE's comprehensive security model is relevant, in some ways, we have not fully implemented that model. We have not always responded to situations with the clarity that is needed.

Our collective response to migration, for example, could have been better. Although the immediate crisis that we faced in 2015 has subsided and there are improvements in the management of the situation, so far, we have not succeeded in addressing the underlying causes of migration. Nor have we succeeded in reconciling the interests of security and stability with the rights of migrants for safety and humane treatment.

We may not face the same situation today of refugees flooding across borders, but we still have migrants attempting the dangerous Mediterranean crossing and the underlying issues like poverty, political repression and conflicts remain. Therefore we cannot say that we have addressed the situation according to our own high standards and values.

And of course, so far, we have also failed to resolve one of the most pressing security challenges in our neighborhood – the crisis in and around Ukraine. Every week we are reminded that this conflict remains very active.

The Ukraine crisis should not be thought of only as an isolated conflict in the Donbas region, but as something that impacts all of Ukraine – and indeed, all of Europe. We must redouble our efforts to resolve this crisis, as well as other protracted conflicts in the OSCE region, not the least of which being Nagorno-Karabakh.

Trust-building and searching for common ground is needed today more than ever. And I am convinced that this is an area that parliamentarians can play an important role. As the most direct link between governments and the people, we have a special role to play in promoting people-to-people contact, facilitating cultural exchanges and enabling meaningful dialogue.

In the Parliamentary Assembly, we see this dialogue taking place all the time, and I hope – and I am sure – to see it happening here in Andorra in the coming days.

We thank our Andorran hosts for providing this important forum, and we look forward to hearing from the local experts and government representatives on the important issues on our agenda.

Thank you all for being here once again.