

CALL FOR ACTION – HELSINKI +50 PROCESS
A Parliamentary Contribution to Restoring OSCE Effectiveness

In July 2020, after participating States could not reach consensus on the reappointment of OSCE Heads of Institution, it was acknowledged that while some of the challenges the Organization is facing are due to the overall crisis of multilateralism, others are of political nature and strictly peculiar to the OSCE. This is due to a complex interchange of factors which include wide divergences and misperceptions on the OSCE's nature, an increasing mistrust between participating States and an overarching lack of strategic political interest placed on it by governments.

Hence, in a process triggered by President Tsereteli, the OSCE PA offered its contribution - especially by leveraging on its significant added value of generating political thrust and raising public awareness - to revive the work of the OSCE and bring back high-level political attention to it. The general idea is to mobilize national parliamentary delegations, including in their national Parliaments and vis-à-vis their governments, to prove that the OSCE is relevant also in the current international security framework and on the way towards the 50th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Parliamentarians can be vocal in flagging crucial political issues concerning the organization, or for instance engage on the level of participation of their country in the OSCE, on the implementation of its commitments, on the reasons behind specific decisions. Such initiative is based on the complementarity of the OSCE components and aims at providing the organization with the needed parliamentary support. In this way, the OSCE can truly “deliver as a whole”, in the words of OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid.

The OSCE PA Bureau endorsed the project, which unfolds as follows:

1. **The Call for Action document**¹ was presented in December 2020 during an event dedicated to the 30th Anniversary of the Charter of Paris and on the margins of the OSCE Ministerial Council. Signed by 52 among current and former OSCE leaders, the document points to the need to strengthen the role of the OSCE in addressing the contemporary challenges and to enhance its effectiveness, including through the promotion of genuine political dialogue. Its aim is to serve as a basis for further work, including on the role of the Parliamentary Assembly.
2. **Targeted meetings and events (Call for Action – Helsinki +50 Process)**. On the basis of the Call for Action, the Secretariat developed a Non-Paper², which lays out more in detail the main challenges the OSCE is facing. After a first general meeting to discuss the essence of the process, held on 27 Jan. 2021, the Secretariat intends to host a number of targeted meetings to address each of the points contained in the Paper and discuss how the PA can contribute more specifically. Such events will be initially held online, but there is the intention to organize them also in selected capitals when conditions will allow. Issues identified in the discussions among Parliamentary delegations as priority include the following: managing the consensus rule; enhancing dialogue; strengthening implementation review mechanisms; promoting better gender mainstreaming; ensuring timely and sufficient resources for the organization; improving interaction with the civil society; streamlining and reprioritizing the OSCE agenda. Perception papers will be drafted during the process, highlighting key conclusions and proposals.

OSCE PA Secretary General Montella appointed Ambassador Lamberto Zannier as High-Level Expert to coordinate these efforts within the International Secretariat, under the leadership of the PA President and Bureau, and in close consultation with the Standing Committee. Participation of OSCE executive structures and external experts is welcomed.

¹ <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/osce-call-for-action>

² Circulated to OSCE PA Delegations on 5 January 2021