

The 31st ANNUAL SESSION OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

SATURDAY, 29 June 2024, 15h00

Opening Session

**Address by Mr. Dan BARNA,
Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies
Head of the Romanian Delegation to the OSCE PA**

Dear Mrs. President,

Dear Mr. President of the Senate,

Dear colleagues,

I would like underline what a great pleasure and honour it is to welcome you in Bucharest.

The work of OSCE touches, in a positive manner, the lives of more than a billion people, both through political dialogue and through practical work.

Steadfast supporter of stability, peace and democracy, the Parliament of Romania and its delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE appreciate the opportunity to host the Annual Session of our Assembly, after 24 years.

We hope that during the following days we will adopt documents and take decisions that will advance our shared values.

Dear colleagues,

Romania decided, in the 1990s, with enthusiasm, that it wants to be part of the community of democratic states, that it wants to promote and protect peace, security, the right of national minorities, the rule of law.

It was the biggest and most successful project of our country in our modern history.

It led us to membership in the OSCE, EU, Council of Europe and NATO.

We know, from our own experience, how important it is for a country to be able to choose its own path and to be free to pursue its goals.

Ukraine, our neighbour, also wants to continue to be part of the democratic community and to be able to determine its own future.

However, the Russian Federation decided that the rules based international order no longer suit its interests. It started, in 2014 and again in 2022, an unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of the UN Charter, the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE commitments.

Romania stood by its neighbour from the first day of the aggression. Our country, together with all EU and NATO Member States, has been supporting Ukraine and the Ukrainian people by providing humanitarian aid, macro-financial and military assistance. And our support remains solid, for as long as it takes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The illegal war of Russia, a threat to European and global security and stability, is also an enormous human tragedy.

We reiterate our firm call on the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally stop this unprovoked and unjustified aggression and withdraw all its military forces and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders.

We also reiterate our call on Belarus to stop enabling the Russian aggression and to abide by its international obligations.

My country maintains its firm position: all those responsible for crimes in Ukraine should, and will, be brought to justice. This is our collective responsibility and the legitimate demand of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

The OSCE plays an important role in documenting violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, through ODIHR reports and those under the Moscow Mechanism, thus contributing to an accountability mechanism.

Dear colleagues,

During these difficult times, the role of international organizations, their mission in fostering peace, security and human rights is more important than ever.

Until Russia will have stopped its unjustified aggression against a sovereign state, OSCE – including the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly - remains a fora where we hold it to account for its violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the current Maltese OSCE Chairpersonship and of the Secretary General took a firm position regarding the aggression.

Through the Support Programme for Ukraine, to which also Romania is a donor, and the work of the Special Representative of the Chairmanship for Ukraine, through the work of autonomous institutions, such as ODIHR, or the OSCE PA's Parliamentary Support Team, OSCE is offering a strong support to Ukraine.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Russia continues its blatant war of aggression and destabilizing actions, it is important to address and alleviate its consequences which are felt beyond Ukraine's borders.

Through its continuous attacks on civilian port infrastructures, Russia displays a cynical disregard towards global food security.

It shows that it simply does not care about the vulnerable populations across the world, dependent on Ukrainian grain exports.

Romania, together with all EU Member States and R. of Moldova, will continue to support timely and stable delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products to global markets.

The Republic of Moldova is Ukraine's most affected neighbor. Chisinau has faced complex hybrid attacks orchestrated from outside. There is a high risk that these will continue and even intensify and diversify.

Despite these attacks, the Republic of Moldova remains stable – only as a result of the tremendous efforts made by the authorities in Chisinau, with considerable support from its international partners.

We will continue to provide all relevant support to the R. of Moldova, to strengthen its resilience in the face of destabilizing activities by external actors and to support its European accession path.

Dear colleagues,

We value and commend the OSCE autonomous institutions for their efforts to promote and protect human rights, as core components of peaceful, inclusive and democratic societies.

Their work, mandates and institutional independence are essential to the promotion and advancement of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law in our region. As many of the conflicts in our region are linked to failures to observe commitments in the human dimension, these efforts are indispensable.

The organisation should continue to focus on its unique mandate, that brings added value to so many countries and people.

Moreover, we should support essential institutions such as OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Media Freedom Representative, in their work in protecting and advancing OSCE values.

We have an efficient infrastructure, which proved that can maintain and develop its main goals during very difficult times, such as the current conflicts.

As my grandfather once said to me, when something is not working, it should be changed. But when something is working, we should keep it.

Thank you.