

Opening address by Prime Minister Rob Jetten

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 33rd Annual Session

Plenary, The Hague, 4 July 2026

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to The Hague, welcome to the Netherlands.

For over a century The Hague has been the place where the international community gathers to prevent conflict, to resolve disputes, and to hold to account those responsible for the gravest of crimes.

Just a short distance from here you'll find the institutions that embody the rule of law in international affairs: the Peace Palace, the International Court of Justice, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the International Criminal Court, and many other tribunals and organisations dedicated to peace and security.

So as a figure of speech you could say that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is coming home these days.

And I sure hope you will all feel at home.

We are honored to have you.

The Hague is proud to call itself the international city of peace and justice.

But it is also a city where people from many countries live side by side and where different cultures, languages and traditions meet in peace every day.

And I think that embodies what lies at the heart of the OSCE commitments.

Namely that open, democratic societies, where people of different backgrounds live together side by side, provide safety and security for their citizens. And you, as representatives of your national parliaments, carry a special responsibility in this respect.

One of the household names in the history of the OSCE is that of the Dutch top diplomat Max van der Stoep, the first High Commissioner on National Minorities. He once told how he started in this job with almost nothing – a small office, a secretary, three seconded staff and a vaguely defined mandate.

It proved a blessing in disguise because it gave Van der Stoel the freedom to step in wherever ethnic tensions arose. And being the experienced diplomat he was, he organized enough international support to be highly successful in his work.

That role – modest in means, but significant in impact – still characterizes the OSCE today.

The organization was founded on the premise that security cannot be built with use of force, but must rest on democracy, respect for human rights, and a rules-based international order. Yet we meet at a time when these foundations are under tremendous strain throughout the entire OSCE area.

On the European continent, Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is not only the largest threat to Europe's collective security.

It is also a direct attack on the principles that underpin this organisation, as set out in the Helsinki Final Act. The same principles according to which Ukraine has a right to sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to choose its own alliances and its own future.

So it's of the utmost importance that we keep in mind at all times that Ukraine is not only defending its own territory and its own citizens. It is defending peace and security on our continent. And it's defending the international rules-based order – including the OSCE and the commitments we all signed up to. That is why the Netherlands stands firmly with Ukraine, and will continue to do so.

It is crucial that we all stay the course and maintain momentum in supporting Ukraine and increasing pressure on Russia.

It has proven to work.

We need European unity on all stages, including at the OSCE, to maximize pressure on Russia and to force Russia to end this war.

We need to show Putin his only way forward is through an immediate ceasefire and to engage in meaningful negotiations towards a just and lasting peace.

I call upon you to send this strong message from The Hague to Moscow.

And I call upon Russia to immediately release the three OSCE officials that are unlawfully detained in Russia.

Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov need to be reunited with their families.

Mr. Cassis, as you recently said yourself: 'When diplomacy seems impossible, it becomes indispensable.'

And you were absolutely right.

The need for strong diplomacy is stronger than ever before in the history of the OSCE. And although engaging in dialogue across such a diverse group of countries has never been easy, it has always been essential for stability and security in the OSCE area.

What we have here is a unique forum, a bridge between East and West, where participating countries can still come together to discuss their shared security.

And I sincerely hope that the outcome of this Parliamentary Assembly will show that we stand united in this.

I wish you all the best of success and a marvelous time in The Hague.

Thank you.