

REPORT

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY 13TH AUTUMN MEETING GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 3-5 OCTOBER 2014



New Security Challenges: The Role of Parliaments



REPORT ON THE 2014 AUTUMN MEETING OF THE OSCE PARLIAMETARY ASSEMBLY

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Summary



Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva addresses the opening session.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly holds an Autumn Meeting every year to enhance inter-parliamentary dialogue on important topics related to OSCE commitments. Previous Autumn Meetings have been held in Slovenia, Malta, Montenegro, Greece, Italy, Canada, Croatia and Albania.

Some 200 parliamentarians from more than 50 countries gathered in Geneva, Switzerland from 3 to 5 October for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 13th Autumn Meeting, held under the theme of "New Security Challenges: The Role of Parliaments."

In opening the Parliamentary Conference, OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) noted that the PA is in a unique position to foster debate and build support for strengthening the Organization. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter and Speaker of the Swiss Parliament Hannes Germann also addressed the opening, highlighting the importance of diplomacy and the role of the OSCE PA in facilitating dialogue. In a special debate on Ukraine, keynote speakers Simon Lunn of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors addressed the Assembly and nearly three dozen OSCE parliamentarians participated, including Russian State Duma Chair Sergey Naryshkin and Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA Oleg Zarubinskyi.

Parliamentarians also took part in the OSCE PA's Mediterranean Forum, held under the theme "Facing Current Challenges to Security in the Mediterranean Region: the OSCE Model." Chaired by OSCE PA Vice-President Alain Neri (France), the Forum included addresses by parliamentary delegations from the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and featured debate on topics including the crises in Iraq, Libya and Syria, the Israel-Palestine conflict and migration.

In session two of the Parliamentary Conference, Second Committee Chair Roza

Aknazarova (Kyrgyzstan) discussed the links between climate change and security and the particular toll taken on low-lying and mountainous countries.

In opening the session on human rights and humanitarian issues, Mehmet Sevki Kulkuloglu (Turkey), Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA's Third Committee, referred to the enduring connection between human rights standards and security.

In a keynote address, Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, urged parliamentarians to link international humanitarian challenges to their national legislation, noting that when political processes fail to prevent conflict, the minimum needed from parliamentarians is to enable humanitarian workers to help those in need.

"As security challenges grow by the day, so too does the need for multilateral co-operation rooted in common principles as expressed in the landmark accords of the OSCE."

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva

Addressing the Standing Committee, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier presented a detailed description of the

proposed OSCE budget for 2015 and fielded questions from the parliamentarians, including from Treasurer Roberto Battelli (Slovenia) and Special Representative on the OSCE Budget Petur Blondal (Iceland). The Standing Committee also unanimously approved an invitation from Speaker of the Georgian Parliament David Usupashvili, delivered by Georgian Head of Delegation Viktor Dolidze, for Georgia to host the Assembly's 25th Annual Session in the summer of 2016.

On the margins of the Autumn Meeting, ODIHR Director Michael Georg Link and senior staff of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held a meeting with the leaders of the election observation missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Ukraine. President Kanerva also held a number of bilateral meetings.

Mediterranean Forum



Alain Neri chairs the Mediterranean Forum.

Chaired by Vice-President Alain Neri (France), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 2014 Mediterranean Forum was held on 3 October under the theme "Facing Current Challenges to Security in the Mediterranean Region: the OSCE Model." The Forum's debate focused on how the OSCE can best co-operate with its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to address ongoing instability and conflict in the region.

Neri, a member of the French Senate, opened the meeting by emphasizing the direct threat posed by the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) to the OSCE area. He highlighted the unsustainable influx of refugees into Jordan and Turkey and urged participants to support Libya's application for partner State status.

Ilkka Kanerva, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly



Ilkka Kanerva

With the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly devoting so much effort towards de-escalating the crisis in Ukraine, President Ilkka Kanerva (Finland) acknowledged that the situation in Middle East had perhaps not received the attention that it deserves. He underlined the importance of prioritizing the Organization's engagement with the Mediterranean, expressing hope that the OSCE PA's Mediterranean Forum in Geneva could help bring the region's challenges into focus.

He stated that the problems impacting the region – including the growth in strength of ISIS, Syrian conflict, the irregular flow of migrants, and the Israel-Palestine conflict – cannot be considered peripheral to the OSCE. It is imperative that efforts to combat these challenges are jointly designed and co-ordinated, he stressed.

Andreas Aebi, Head of the Swiss Delegation to the OSCE PA

Andreas Aebi spoke of the need to target the financing of terrorism, noting that ransom money is a source of considerable revenue for terrorist groups. He argued that by refusing to pay for hostages, States can discourage the



Andreas Aebi

odious practice of commoditizing human life. A deeper understanding of the relationship between instability, crises, and terrorism is vital to developing sustainable solutions to current challenges, he added.

Debate

The debate featured robust participation by members of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, the Palestinian Legislative Council and many OSCE participating States. There was a general consensus that the international response to the crisis in Syria has been inadequate, and some called for greater measures to be taken to address all aspects of the conflict.

While many delegates expressed anxiety about the threat of ISIS, several stressed that alternatives to military action must be developed and utilized as long-term security and stability can only be achieved when the root causes of unrest are addressed.



Parliamentary Conference Opening Session



Didier Burkhalter speaks with Andreas Aebi.

The 2014 Autumn Meeting's Parliamentary Conference, held under the theme "New Security Challenges: The Role of Parliaments," opened on 3 October with OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Ilkka Kanerva reminding delegates of the Assembly's call at the 23rd Annual Session in Baku for all OSCE participating States to adhere to fundamental principles and norms of international law, as enshrined in the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. But he stressed that there is still a long way to go before these ideals are realized.

In the Ukraine conflict, he noted, there has been much criticism over the apparent funneling of weapons and personnel from Russia into eastern Ukraine, fueling the armed separatist movement there. Kanerva said he was "cautiously optimistic" about recent signs of de-escalation, while underscoring that "any solution to the crisis must be predicated on a genuine commitment by Russia to abide by all Helsinki Commitments."

He nevertheless pointed out that the rules apply to both sides of the conflict, and Kyiv is equally responsible for ensuring that armed militias fighting on its behalf respect the Code of Conduct's stipulation that all participating States provide effective guidance to and control of its military, paramilitary and security forces and that each State "will ensure that its armed forces as such are politically neutral."

The OSCE PA President highlighted the burgeoning threat of ISIS and other extremist groups to the OSCE area, urging parliamentarians to work together to strengthen international responses. He also referenced recent mass demonstrations on climate change, encouraging par-

liamentarians to press their governments to fully commit to tackling the problem, and reported on the OSCE PA's ongoing Helsinki +40 Project.

Hannes Germann, Speaker of the Council of States of Switzerland

Hannes Germann welcomed participants to Geneva on behalf of the Swiss Federal Parliament, noting with satisfaction the high level of participation and highlighting the Swiss city's longstanding role as a forum for dialogue between peoples and nations.



Hannes Germann

Pointing to the importance of diplomacy in resolving conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, Germann said that it is only through dialogue that we can acquire mutual understanding. He further explained that despite having four national languages, Switzerland has maintained peace and balance within the country largely due to the distribution of power at local, regional and national levels. Federalism has been key to Switzerland's success in this regard, he said.

Germann highlighted the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's importance in the overall security of the European continent, particularly in regard to the protection of minorities through its efforts to promote co-operation and dialogue, which in turn builds confidence, trust and secu-

Parliamentary Conference Opening Session

city. He expressed appreciation for the Assembly's perseverance in continued commitment to building a comprehensive security framework.

Didier Burkhalter, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Swiss Foreign Minister



Didier Burkhalter

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Didier Burkhalter urged the OSCE parliamentarians gathered in Geneva to support the “very fragile shift” from “a military to a political logic in the Ukraine crisis.”

“The first and most imminent priority of the OSCE remains Ukraine,” Burkhalter told delegates. “The parties must continue to take steps to make the ceasefire more sustainable and implement all commitments agreed in Minsk. All shooting and shelling must now stop. Differences must be resolved through dialogue rather than force,” Burkhalter added.

The OSCE CiO underscored the important role of the OSCE PA in facilitating and supporting that dialogue. He also emphasized that the danger posed by the crisis extends far beyond Ukraine's borders, noting that the violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea could have wide-ranging repercussions.

“They call into question the foundations of European security as defined in the Paris Charter on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act,” he said.

Burkhalter also referred to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Helsinki +40 Project, a series of seminars aimed at promoting reform of the Organization to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. He echoed calls by OSCE parliamentarians related to the need for the Organization to develop better capacities for early warning and mediation of conflicts, as well as to ensure vigorous implementation of OSCE values and commitments, particularly in the human dimension.



Marietta Tidei



Ilkka Kanerva



Kyriakos Hadjiyiannis

2014 Autumn Meeting ♦ Geneva, Switzerland





Session One: Debate on the Crisis in Ukraine



The debate on the crisis in Ukraine, held on the afternoon of 3 October, was chaired by Ilkka Kanerva (Finland), President of the OSCE PA, and Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA's General Committee on Political Affairs and Security.

In opening the debate, Kanerva stressed the importance of maintaining communication and keeping networks of contacts active despite the crisis. He urged parliamentarians to promote dialogue, and to call for more human and financial resources from their governments in order to reinforce the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Kanerva noted the important role of the OSCE PA's upcoming deployment of observers to the Ukrainian parliamentary elections on 26 October, underlining the importance of these elections for the stability of Ukraine.

Simon Lunn, International Advisory Board of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

Simon Lunn, keynote speaker from the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, focused on the broader implications of the crisis in Ukraine. Lunn underlined that fundamental principles on which European security is based have been broken, including the right of a country to choose its future. He



expressed concerns about the risk of seeing only a pattern of action and reaction, and urged finding ways to immediately de-escalate the situation while a comprehensive political solution is pursued. To this end, he said all channels of communication must be kept open, adding that the OSCE, as it includes the Russian Federation as a full member, has to be "the primary forum for engagement."

In the longer term, Lunn identified the need to strengthen the existing framework regulating military forces in the OSCE region and to revive the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) regime, which he regretted is unlikely in the current climate of conflict and mistrust. Nevertheless, arms control negotiation can help to bolster stability, he said. Lunn pointed out that the situation in Ukraine is an indication that Europe must continue to seek effective long-term security structures, based on the understanding that "we are using the same language and playing by the same rules; if it is not the case then ideas of co-operative security structures will only remain ideas."

Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities



Astrid Thors focused her keynote presentation on the impact of the Ukraine crisis on the international system of minority rights protection. In order to curtail negative trends in the country, Thors said that commonly

Session One: Debate on the Crisis in Ukraine



Debate

Session one concluded with a lively debate in which delegates highlighted the threat that the Ukraine crisis poses to OSCE principles. Delegates stressed the need for both sides to match pledges with real commitment to a truce and a diplomatic

agreed rules and principles, including the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations, must be upheld.

The politicization of identity issues has reinforced existing language divisions, she said, leading to a wide regional divide in Ukraine. She stressed the importance of having a Ukrainian Parliament that represents all citizens of Ukraine, including eastern regions and Crimea. The High Commissioner called for a balanced approach to language policies, promoting knowledge of the state language while protecting minority languages. In this regard, she welcomed efforts of the Ukrainian Government to develop a new institutional framework for inter-ethnic and national minority issues and to update related legislation. Thors further expressed concerns about the vulnerable position of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian-speaking communities in Crimea.

She also stressed the need for participating States to engage in continuous, open and direct dialogue with OSCE Institutions. Finally, Thors emphasized parliamentarians' important role in this regard by keeping their governments accountable.

solution. State Duma Chair and Head of the Russian Delegation to the OSCE PA Sergey Naryshkin said that Russia saw “no alternative to a political exit from the crisis” and urged an OSCE investigation into allegations of human rights violations by Ukraine.

Oleg Zarubinskyi, Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the OSCE PA, encouraged the Russian Federation to reciprocate what he described as Ukraine's implementation of steps to de-escalate the crisis, and called for monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian border by representatives of both countries and the OSCE. The proposal of a trilateral monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian border was generally positively received by delegates.

Several additional concerns were raised by OSCE parliamentarians, with particular attention placed on the toll that the conflict has had on average Ukrainians and the effectiveness of sanctions in response to the crisis. The parties to the conflict were also urged to return to negotiations and to comply with the provisions of the OSCE's Minsk Protocol to help prevent civilian casualties.



Sergey Naryshkin



Oleg Zarubinskyi

Session Two: Economic and Environmental Dimension



Roza Aknazarova

The second session of the Parliamentary Conference, focusing on the economic and environmental dimension, took place on 4 October and was chaired by Roza Aknazarova (Kyrgyzstan), the Chair of the OSCE PA's Second Committee. In her opening remarks, Aknazarova noted the significance of new security challenges in the economic and environmental dimension.

"The challenges we face in this dimension are enormous, particularly when we consider evolving challenges such as climate change and the impact this is having on other aspects of security," Aknazarova said.

She referred to the PA's Declaration adopted at the 2014 Annual Session in Baku, which called upon OSCE participating States to continue to work towards a new universal climate agreement so that it appears on the table at the UN climate change conference in Lima, ahead of final agreement in Paris, in 2015.

Aknazarova welcomed the results of the UN's climate change conference in New York on 23 September 2014 and the pledges made by many world leaders to secure a comprehensive global climate agreement in Paris. She noted that pledges to mitigate climate change must be followed by concrete action.

Keith Krause, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva

In his keynote presentation, Professor Keith Krause analyzed the shifting face of violence and its new challenges. Conventional understandings of violence, he said, tend to draw clear distinctions between different categories of violence, ranging from inter-personal and



Keith Krause

criminal violence to intra- or inter-communal violence either politically or socio-economically motivated, to large-scale political violence associated with war, whether intra- or inter-state. One of the primary functions of the modern State, he said, is to provide security to its citizens – whether from external threats through national defence and armed forces or from internal threats through police and the justice system – and punishment for criminals.

Most of the States worst affected by armed violence, he noted, are not at war and the levels of armed violence in non-conflict settings are higher than in most war zones. These facts pose serious challenges for regional, national and international security, and many policy responses are inadequate, he said, whether they involve mediation and conflict resolution, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace building, or more robust and forceful intervention in zones of insecurity that are impossible to control.

Two of the characteristics of "new" forms of violence have been the economic and material – as opposed to political or ideological. These trends have a serious negative impact on social, economic and human well-being, Krause stressed.

Theodor Winkler, Director of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

In his keynote presentation, Ambassador Theodor Winkler focused on issue of public-private partnerships regulating private security companies. DCAF has gained significant expertise and experience over the years as the Swiss Government's strategic partner in devel-

Session Two: Economic and Environmental Dimension

oping innovative approaches to private security regulation, he said. Innovative solutions are needed, Winkler said, to address challenges to international security, enable social and economic development and protect the rule of law. He outlined the development of the two initiatives at the international level that form the Swiss Initiative on private security regulation: the Montreux Document (focusing on the obligations of States) and the International Code of Conduct (focusing on the private security industry itself). Both seek to promote international humanitarian law and human rights law in conflict settings and to ensure effective national control, including through parliamentary oversight.

Serious challenges remain at the national level, as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has recognized, he noted. A resolution adopted by the Assembly at the Baku Annual Session in July 2014, for example, calls on OSCE participating States to establish concrete means to hold the private security sector accountable. Winkler reiterated the commitment of DCAF to support these efforts for greater accountability and oversight in the OSCE region.

Desiree Schweitzer, Deputy Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs of the OSCE

Desiree Schweitzer highlighted her office's activities for 2013-2014, specifically on disaster risk reduction, water security, climate change and environmental good governance. She referred to the Second Preparatory Meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environment Forum held in May 2014 in Montreux, Switzerland, which focused on responding to environmental challenges in order to promote co-operation and security in the OSCE area.

The office has been promoting sustainable water management, an issue that will continue to be one of the office's priorities under the Serbian Chairmanship in 2015, she said. In July 2014 the office co-organized a Security Days event which explored the linkages between water and security, confirming that water resource competition can be a potential source of tension and conflicts. The office closely co-operates with the OSCE field presence in organizing seminars and assisting host

governments in combating corruption, money laundering, terrorism financing and trafficking in human beings.

Debate

Session two concluded with a general debate in which Members addressed a range of issues including water resources, the environmental disaster risk reduction and the effects of climate change and ecological disasters on human rights and international security. One parliamentarian underscored the risk of using environmental resources as "arms" and called on the Assembly to recognize that we all share a common obligation for responsible resource management and environmental risk reduction. Another concern raised was regarding the risks of ecological disasters, which can lead to human rights violations, especially when communities are forced to leave their homes.

Environmental degradation can enable non-state actors to undermine the authority of governments, with broader security and economic implications, delegates argued. Furthermore, environmental protection should be considered a key component of overall good governance. A number of parliamentarians highlighted the importance of investing in alternative energy sources, the importance of nuclear security and nuclear waste disposal.

One parliamentarian welcomed the adoption of the UN Arms Trade Treaty and its ratification by EU countries. The danger posed by the Islamic State terrorist group was also highlighted by some parliamentarians, emphasizing the need to prevent the flow of weapons to the organization.







Session Three: Human Dimension



Mehmet Sevki Kulkuloglu

Under the chairmanship of Mehmet Sevki Kulkuloglu (Turkey), Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, parliamentarians met on 5 October to discuss the human dimension of new security challenges and the role of parliaments. Introducing the debate, Kulkuloglu suggested that while there are many new security challenges facing the OSCE area, the principles outlined in the Helsinki Final Act 40 years ago remain vital tools for addressing challenges today.

Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC President Peter Maurer noted that while the mandates of the OSCE and the ICRC differ, there is considerable overlap in the context of their work. Whereas the OSCE focuses on preventing and resolving conflicts, ICRC efforts are purely humanitarian, working to ease the impacts of conflicts on those directly affected. Turning to new security challenges, he outlined six areas in which the ICRC is currently engaged.

First, the changing global environment means that emerging countries now often possess added capacity. The ICRC has therefore enlarged its engagement with these non-traditional donor countries.

Second, there is an increasing trend in which new actors, without clear power structures, are having a significant impact the battlefield. Third, the shape of the battlefield is changing

with technology – remote operations, cyber warfare and militarized policing are requiring some redefinition of traditional battlefield concepts.

Fourth, Maurer pointed to a deepening and expansion of conflict dynamics through which national conflicts turn to regional and global threats. He also noted the tendency for temporary conflicts to turn into protracted and sometimes regional conflicts. Fifth, conflict-affected States are showing decreasing capacity to provide essential services to their populations.

Finally, he raised concerns about the increasing pace of conflict, now impacted by social media. This high speed and global attention has affected the ability to conduct confidential dialogue and thereby have a positive humanitarian impact, Maurer said.

Concluding his remarks, the ICRC President noted that there are limitations to humanitarian response and that political action through conflict resolution is needed to enable access.

Gianni Magazzeni, Chief - Americas, Europe and Central Asia Branch, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Providing background on the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Gianni Magazzeni described the gradual build-up of responsibilities through various treaties, leading to its now comprehensive mandate. While the mandate now effectively covers all human rights universally, the Office continues to work at the national level by encouraging implementation of international commitments. In this regard, he noted that legislation is important but not sufficient – implementation also requires engagement by governments, parliaments, media and civil society.

Turning his attention to Ukraine, Magazzeni described the Office's human rights monitoring work in the country. With some 30 staff engaged, it provides critical facts and monthly reports. Notable breaches of human rights began during the Maidan protests, he said, but had worsened in the east of the country.

Session Three: Human Dimension

Magazzeni stressed the critical role played by parliamentarians to ensure compliance with human rights obligations. The role is not only legislative, he pointed out, noting that lawmakers can also launch action plans, strengthen education, and set up human rights bodies at the national level. He also suggested that MPs establish human rights committees within parliaments for issues within their respective countries.

Guy Rhodes, Director of Operations of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

A century since the beginning of the First World War, some 150 to 200 tonnes of unexploded ordnance from the conflict are still being recovered every year in Belgium alone, said Guy Rhodes in his presentation. Describing the challenge of clearing unexploded ordnance and landmines, he gave a short overview of progress to date – explaining in particular where efforts are needed most.

Rhodes highlighted the importance of the Ottawa Convention on landmines, with 182 signatories, as well as the ongoing international work to eliminate cluster munitions.

Anti-vehicle mines are proving increasingly deadly, he said, describing efforts to make these devices more detectable. Finally, he described the increasing problem posed by improvised explosive devices, which are often based on unexploded ordnance.

Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction

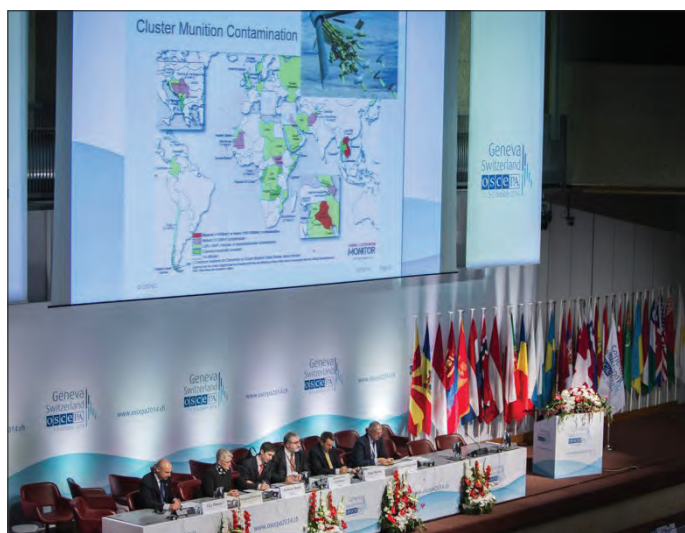
Margareta Wahlstrom gave an overview of the importance of disaster risk reduction developments in the field. She noted, for example, that improved infrastructure has resulted in greater economic losses from disasters, but fewer lives lost. Within the OSCE, she noted, the percentage loss is more than the percentage of GDP growth.

Addressing structural challenges, Wahlstrom noted that many major cities are built on earthquake fault lines and in river basins. Preparations in these areas are critical. However, she noted that it is only relatively recently that there has been increased trans-boundary co-operation on flooding. The Special Representative also discussed the relationship between disasters and conflicts, noting, for example, the unearthing of landmines during the severe flooding in the Balkans earlier in 2014.

Turning to the role of parliamentarians, Wahlstrom highlighted the work that lawmakers can achieve in connecting climate change mitigation to disaster preparedness. Her office had established a parliamentary network to help raise awareness and ensure that parliaments have the necessary expertise to bring together issues related to disaster management such as urban planning, education, global warming, and hospital work.

Debate

In the ensuing discussion, parliamentarians raised questions related to the mixing of combatant and non-combatant roles in conflict zones, specifically addressing the situation in Syria and the conflict's humanitarian impact, and stressed the need for thorough investigations of events in Ukraine. The role of parliamentarians in outreach on issues such as landmine reduction was also emphasized. Similarly, the importance of dialogue and supporting minority rights to counteract conflict were underlined as critical needs.







Standing Committee Meeting



The Standing Committee consists of the OSCE PA's 57 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau. Meeting three times a year – at the Winter Meeting, Autumn Meeting and Annual Session – the Standing Committee guides the work of the Assembly, approves its budget and appoints the Secretary General.

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva opened the meeting of the Standing Committee on 4 October with a report on his recent participation in several meetings with senior officials, including Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Ukrainian Rada Speaker Oleksandr Turchynov, in Moscow and Oslo. Having made the Ukraine crisis a priority since his election in July, Kanerva reiterated the PA's intention to dispatch an election observation mission for the country's 26 October parliamentary elections, describing them as "crucially important for Ukraine's stability and democratic aspirations."

Treasurer Roberto Battelli provided an update on the PA's finances, reporting that they remain in good health, but called upon participating States that have not yet hosted an OSCE PA event to consider doing so in the near future. Although the PA's activities will reach close to 100 per cent of its allocated expenditure during the current financial year, the Assembly continues to operate within its approved budget, he said.

OSCE PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver began his report with praise for Azerbaijan's successful hosting of the 2014 Annual Session. He also reported that prior to the Standing Committee meeting, Secretariat staff had met with ODIHR Director Georg Michael Link and a group of parliamentarians to discuss upcoming election observation missions that the OSCE PA would observe.

Vilija Aleknaite Abramikiene, Special Coordinator for the election observation mission to Turkey on 10 August, gave her evaluation of that country's presidential election, for which the PA worked closely with the ODIHR and PACE. Abramikiene described the co-operation between with these bodies as "productive," but expressed frustration with instances of uncompromising behaviour on the part of ODIHR and PACE interlocutors.

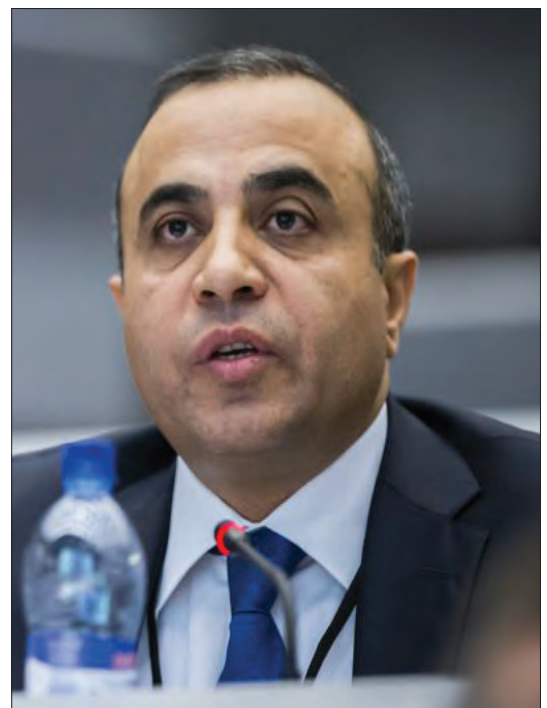
OSCE PA Special Representatives updated

members on activities undertaken within their areas of responsibility. While Special Representative on Border Issues Ignacio Sanchez Amor informed members of a relevant visit to Georgia, Special Representative on Gender Dr. Hedy Fry called for increased efforts towards gender equality as we approach the 2015 Beijing +20 conference on female empowerment.

Special Representative on the OSCE Budget Petur Blondal welcomed a modest increase in the OSCE budget for 2015, but criticized what he called the "concentration of resources to the Vienna-based administrations at the expense of field missions." In his capacity as Helsinki +40 Project Chair, Joao Soares provided details of the Project's Moscow seminar, organized in conjunction with the Russian International Affairs Council.

OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier presented an overview to the Standing Committee of the 2015 OSCE draft budget, which total 144 million EUR for the year. In nominal terms, this is a 1.9 million EUR (1.4 per cent) increase on the previous year's budget, but a decrease in real terms. This includes cuts to field operations in South East Europe, a modest increase in the Vienna Secretariat budget and extra financial provision for the OSCE's increased operational presence in Ukraine.

Addressing the Standing Committee, Nyamaa Enkhbold of Mongolia asked for the support of PA Members in making the 2015 Autumn Meeting, to be held in Ulaanbaatar, a "great experience for the Mongolian Parliament" and a "successful step towards advancing security sector co-operation among participating States." He further welcomed it as an opportunity to "contribute to the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly." The Standing Committee concluded proceedings with a unanimous vote to hold the 2016 Annual Session in Tbilisi, Georgia.



Closing Session



Andreas Aebi



Ilkka Kanerva

Wrapping up the 2014 Autumn Meeting on 5 October, the Head of the Swiss Delegation to the OSCE PA, Andreas Aebi, extended his gratitude to the participants and to the speakers who addressed issues including the challenges facing the Mediterranean, the situation in Ukraine, mines and cluster munitions, human rights and humanitarian concerns, and risk management issues.

Noting that all speakers had inspired participants to think of new ways of tackling the challenges facing the OSCE area, he emphasized that the parliamentarians' work should not end with conclusion of the conference. The OSCE and its parliamentarians are more in demand than ever, he said, calling for a revival of the spirit of Helsinki, which in 1975

led to the foundation for overcoming divisions between the East and West. He noted that two years of negotiations in Geneva preceded the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, and welcomed the opportunity to continue discussions at the OSCE PA's 2015 Annual Session in Helsinki.

He encouraged his colleagues to take an active part in solving the most pressing problems in the OSCE area, noting that a formal setting is not always needed for engaging in parliamentary diplomacy, nor to advance OSCE values and commitments.

Ilkka Kanerva, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

In his closing remarks, President Kanerva noted that the conference had provided an

opportunity to hear a wide range of views from experts, parliamentarians, OSCE officials and high-level representatives of Switzerland. The meeting served as an important opportunity to learn from one another and debate the way forward for the entire OSCE region, he said, recalling that in his opening address, he had underlined Switzerland's proactive approach to international relations and security, which he noted "we have had a great opportunity to familiarize ourselves with" during the three days of speeches and debates.

The president returned to an issue that had been discussed in depth over the three days of speeches and debates, namely the Ukraine crisis. He pointed out the situation in the country is a serious problem not only

for Ukrainians, but also for the wider region, having become a geopolitical hotspot in the OSCE area. "The crisis challenges the security of Europe as well as the capacity of the OSCE as a whole," he said. "We can never accept the violation of any of our basic principles."

He stressed that finding a solution to the Ukrainian problem is the responsibility of not only the parties concerned, but also the OSCE, including the Parliamentary Assembly. The president recalled that during the Autumn Meeting, the PA also reiterated its commitment to greater engagement with its Mediterranean partners.

He concluded by thanking the Swiss hosts of the meeting, as well as the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, headed by Ambassador Theodor Winkler, for

"We can never accept the violation of any of our basic principles."

OSCE PA President Ilkka Kanerva

Closing Session



Ruedi Lustenberger

making the meeting a success. He noted in particular the valuable contributions of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

**Ruedi Lustenberger,
Speaker of the National Council of
Switzerland**

Ruedi Lustenberger reiterated the thanks extended by Andreas Aebi, noting his particular appreciation for the staff of the Swiss Parliamentary Services and the OSCE PA's International Secretariat in making the meeting a success.

The parliamentarians of the OSCE area had expressed their positions and opinions clearly during the conference, he said, with much of the focus on the conflict in Ukraine. Although the debate had been sometimes contentious and emotional, it was also conducted with respect for fundamental differences of opinion, he pointed out.

He further emphasized the importance of ensuring a separation of power in democracies, and of preventing authority from becoming too concentrated. In this regard, parliamentary oversight of the other branches of government is essential to maintaining credibility. The importance of this oversight applies also to the OSCE, Lustenberger said, emphasizing the role of the Parliamentary Assembly in bolstering the legitimacy of the Organization in this regard.

Members of the Parliamentary Assembly have both legitimacy and recognition, which strengthens the OSCE as a whole, he said. Finally, he wished the Assembly continued success for the sake of citizens in Europe and around the world.



Nilza Sena



George Tsereteli



Ignacio Sanchez Amor







Secretary General
Spencer Oliver

The OSCE PA International Secretariat provides administrative support for the Assembly in its various activities. The Secretariat organizes the meetings of the Assembly and provides support for election observation projects, special missions and Presidential activities. Its work is carried out in co-operation with other OSCE Institutions and international parliamentary organizations. The Secretariat, which is hosted by the Danish Parliament, is headed by Secretary General Spencer Oliver, and has a permanent staff of 19, including four staff members at the Liaison Office in Vienna.



Deputy Secretary
General
Gustavo Pallares



Deputy Secretary
General
Semyon Dzakhayev



Special
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Andreas Nothelle



Director of Elections
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Communications
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Bringing together 323 parliamentarians from across the 57-nation OSCE region, including Europe, Asia and North America, the OSCE PA provides a forum for parliamentary dialogue, leads election observation missions, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, originally established by the 1990 Paris Summit to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, is the oldest continuing OSCE Institution.

The basic objectives of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are:

- To assess the implementation of OSCE objectives by participating States;
- To discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- To develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- To support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating States;
- To contribute to the development of OSCE institutional structures and of relations between existing OSCE Institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly employs a variety of means:

- A Final Declaration and a number of resolutions and recommendations are adopted each year at the Annual Session in July;
- Committee work addresses important contemporary international issues;
- Programmes and Seminars designed to develop and strengthen democracy including an extensive election observation programme;
- Special parliamentary missions to areas of latent or active crisis.



OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

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