



President of the OSCE PA Ilkka Kanerva

Closing Remarks

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Autumn Meeting

Geneva, 5 October 2014

Distinguished guests and colleagues, dear friends,

After three days of learning from each other and debating the way forward for the entire OSCE region, we know this conference has been a success.

As you may remember, in my opening remarks I underlined that the Swiss have managed not only to stay out of armed conflicts, they have also promoted a proactive approach to international relations and security.

Over the past three days, we have had a great opportunity to familiarize ourselves with it. We have heard a wide range of views from experts, parliamentarians, OSCE officials and high-level representatives of Switzerland.

We have also discussed the situation on Ukraine. It is clear to all of us that the situation in Ukraine is a serious problem. It has become one of the political hotspots in the OSCE area. The crisis challenges the security of Europe as well as the capacity of the OSCE as a whole. It also challenges the values and basic principles of our Organization. We can never accept the violation of any of our basic principles.

Finding a solution to the Ukrainian problem is naturally the responsibility of the parties concerned, but the OSCE as a whole, we as parliamentarians, and the Parliamentary Assembly as an institution, should now work together to provide active support and contribution to the numerous attempts in finding a political solution.

From the Assembly's side, the next step is the parliamentary elections in Ukraine on 26 October. This will be an important mission, and I encourage all member countries to take part in this mission led by Kent Harstedt and Doris Barnett.

We have also reiterated our commitment to greater engagement with our Mediterranean partners.

On this point, I would like to warmly thank our hosts, represented today by Mr. Lustenberger, Speaker of the National Council of Switzerland, and Mr. Aebi, Head of the Swiss Delegation to the OSCE PA, and the entire Swiss Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, headed by Ambassador Winkler, for making this meeting a success. We have all been able to learn from the experience of such keynote institutions, as the International Committee of the Red Cross, DCAF and OHCHR, to mention but a few.

I would also like to use this opportunity, and I trust I speak for us all, to thank the staff of the Swiss Parliament and our professional team of interpreters who have done an excellent job allowing people from Canada to Mongolia to discuss and understand one another. Thank you to the staff of the International Secretariat for its work to make this conference a reality as well.

From all the things a man can create bridges are the most valuable and the most important. I believe this session has been a great opportunity for us to build such bridges and continue the dialogue.

To make the results of our discussion most meaningful, we must, upon returning to our capitals, turn them into concrete plans we can implement in our own countries and on the international level. So let us all commit ourselves to working towards this objective.

Thank you.