



REPORT OF OSCE PA SECRETARY GENERAL  
ROBERTO MONTELLA  
22nd AUTUMN MEETING



Dublin, 2 October  
2024

Our Bucharest Session was another demonstration of the OSCE PA's strength and agility, and the great commitment of Members to contribute to improving security in the OSCE vast region (from Vancouver to Vladivostok).

We owe great **thanks to the Romanian parliament** for its superb hosting of our meeting which enabled the Assembly to deliver clear and strong messages on many key issues within the OSCE's remit. The inclusion of **special debates** on major topics of interest to Members, including in particular **on Ukraine** and **the Middle East**, demonstrated again the **Assembly as a forum for dialogue that can contribute to understanding and devising possible solutions**.

I was **heartened by the support of Members** for my continued leadership of the OSCE PA Secretariat, which further provides stability to our work for the coming years. I see this as a sign of confidence in the entire Secretariat's team for their professional services in support of our Members of Parliament. This stability is a critically important factor at a time of great difficulty for the broader OSCE, and I will continue working to ensure that the Parliamentary Assembly remains a constructive partner supporting the OSCE process.

## **PA Contributions to the OSCE and regional security**

The OSCE is in need of great support. **The Governmental side of the Organization has been functioning without an approved budget for three years**. While regular daily operations are able to continue, the overall situation is seriously hampering the ability of the OSCE to deliver on what members expect of it. There is a general understanding that this current situation in the OSCE governmental side is not helpful in terms of providing the best conditions for the over 3.000 employees of the OSCE to deliver on their very delicate mandates. I would like to appeal to Members of Parliament to use whatever opportunities you have within your own parliament to encourage full funding for the OSCE.

**In early September the OSCE's situation became even more challenging when the mandates of the four most senior officials of the OSCE expired** without selection of their successors. As mandated by the Assembly in the Bucharest Declaration, I have established working relations with the officers in charge and will continue to work to support

our partners in the OSCE Secretariat, ODIHR, the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. **The OSCE as a collective body should not be silenced by one or two governments** withholding support for appointing new professionals as the Heads of Institutions, and I have reiterated the OSCE PA's willingness to be vocal on important issues.

The OSCE PA has always been vocal and active on important issues. In early September, **President Pia Kauma** gave a strong **presentation to the Permanent Council** of the priority topics addressed by our Assembly in Bucharest. Her vocal advocating for OSCE PA concerns can help ensure that they remain high on the agenda of OSCE Ministers. In the past month the **President** has also **travelled to Budapest, Jerusalem, and Ramallah** to ensure that the Assembly's voice is heard in policy circles related to EU affairs and the Middle East.

**Assembly work in South East Europe** has been particularly active, with Kyriakos Hadjiyianni travelling as Special Representative **travelling to Serbia and Montenegro**. In Montenegro, he was joined by more than 20 MPs when he convened **the second inter-parliamentary forum of the Delegations from South East Europe** to the OSCE PA, which has developed into a useful forum for discussing topics of specific concern within the region.

Members have continued to highlight **migration** as a **priority topic impacting OSCE countries**. This will be on the agenda for our conference in Dublin, but our **ad hoc committee on migration**, led by **Vice-President Daniela De Ridder**, has also organized a landmark **visit to Morocco** to better understand the dynamics of migration in and through that country. Establishing policies in support of safe and legal migration policies is in the interest of OSCE countries, and I'm pleased that the committee is continuing to work on topics that can directly impact policy-making.

I want to particularly **applaud the OSCE PA Network of Young Parliamentarians**, which recently brought together **18 parliamentarians in Stavanger, Norway**, focused on key issues such as energy innovation, green transition, youth participation, and the protection of critical infrastructure. Chaired by Special Representative David Stögmüller, this group is an example of how the OSCE PA can serve

as a forum for groups with common interests and concerns to benefit from each others' experiences. Our **new Special Representative on Artificial Intelligence, Tine Novak**, also **addressed the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**, ensuring that our parliamentary perspective on this emerging security issue is considered.

A snap parliamentary **election in Azerbaijan on 1 September** kicked off what will be an exceptionally busy elections season for the OSCE PA. I'm grateful to Michael Creed and Lucie Potuckova for their leadership of this endeavor in Azerbaijan, along with the other 52 parliamentarians and staff who dedicated their time to this work during the summer. In the near future, **within less than four weeks the OSCE PA will be observing elections in Moldova, Georgia, Uzbekistan and the United States**. This is an unprecedented concentration of elections and will severely strain the Secretariat's human and financial resources, but I'm confident of my team's continued professional delivery of services to this important work.

## **Budgetary and Secretariat administrative matters**

**The approval of our budget in Bucharest in July is a clear recognition by parliaments of the importance of the work that we do in the OSCE PA. It is also a demonstration by Assembly Members of their support for the Secretariat and of our careful management of finances and resources. I thank Treasurer Johan Buser for his co-operation in this process. The Treasurer's frugal approach, coupled with the President's continued efforts to identify new revenue sources, and the Secretariat's cost-cutting steps and strict economizing efforts have enabled us to continue a high-level of service despite Russia's withholding of 6% of our budget.**

In the Secretariat we are determined to ensure that Russia's efforts to block Assembly work through non-payment of their dues does not undermine our efforts. However, we also understand that continued cost-cutting is not a sustainable solution to this particular challenge. While we are all hopeful for an improvement that would enable the Assembly to return to full funding and predictable relations, under current circumstances we must plan for continued non-payment by Russia. **It is my hope that**

**the political leadership of the Assembly will provide directional guidance on this topic so that, together with the Treasurer, we can prepare long-term planning for sustainable funding and work.**

The bulk of spending on Assembly activities in our budgets has long been mostly divided between our statutory meetings and election observation. Financial commitments to additional activities between our main meetings has typically been minimal. While this may continue to be the right approach, **I feel compelled to report on the enthusiasm that parliaments have demonstrated for additional activities such as ad hoc committee meetings and visits, field visits to OSCE missions, Special Representatives initiatives etc.** In order to sustain these non-statutory activities with the necessary professional support we will need to consider additional resources in next year's draft budget request.

As we commence our new budget year on **1 October, a full audit of our 2023/24 fiscal year also begins.** As decided by the Standing Committee, **Deloitte will again be conducting an integrated business/performance audit that covers not only our financial management but overall management processes.** When this expanded audit was first suggested several years ago, **I welcomed the additional scrutiny and insisted that the scope include "the full package" of what could be audited to ensure that we benefit from all possible advice.** I'm pleased that this was agreed by the Standing Committee in Vancouver. As **Deloitte took a broad approach** in their first expanded performance audit, I expect that they will be examining some aspects in greater detail, based on their own risk assessment. I will continue to work to ensure that our external auditors can conduct their work without direction or interference, so that the Assembly can benefit from independent assessment of our finances and management performance.

Within the Secretariat we have continued to adjust our processes and make improved use of modern tools to find efficiencies. A new digital app for travel authorization and leave approval will streamline our processes and provide useful transparency. **I continue to be impressed by the capacity of the Secretariat team to provide high quality services**

**and to constantly improve our work, even under challenging and uncertain circumstances.** I thank them for their dedication and support to Members of Parliament and to the broader OSCE.

Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
Roberto Montella

Dublin, 2 October 2024

*Roberto Montella*

