

## **Jerry Buttimer, Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann**

Closing session of OSCE PA Parliamentary Conference

'Fifty Years After Helsinki: The Role of Parliaments in Reinforcing the OSCE's  
Comprehensive Model of Peace and Security'

Dublin | 3 October 2024

*Check against delivery.*

A Chairde,

A Chomhaltaí den Tionól Parlaiminteach, Members of the Parliamentary Assembly,

As the Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, the Upper House of the Irish Parliament, I am very pleased and honoured to say a few words during the closing session of what has been a productive and insightful Parliamentary Conference.

In saying so, I must take the opportunity to thank all of the delegates, including OSCE parliamentarians, keynote speakers and members of the diplomatic corps, for their active participation and insightful observations during the last two days.

I must also thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for hosting this conference and the overall 22nd Autumn meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In fact, as has been said earlier on, this is the first time the Houses have taken on this endeavour. I believe it has been a truly successful one. In particular, I want to thank the Public Engagement and the Interparliamentary teams of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, whose assistance was vital in ensuring this could take place.

As noted by the previous speakers, this conference's theme represented a significant opportunity to discuss the active role of parliaments in reinforcing the OSCE's comprehensive peace and security mandate.

Indeed, during the three working sessions of this conference, we heard addresses by our former Prime Minister, our Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications and officials of various Irish agencies, and strong engagement from representatives of international organisations, on a range of issues of direct relevance to this theme.

First, we heard on the OSCE's conflict cycle, including matters such as dialogue facilitation, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. We were reminded that "the most important lesson is simply that a peace process can succeed". A peace process must be inclusive and civil society has a huge role to play in building and sustaining the peace. We heard many references to the roles that women have played and continue to play in achieving lasting peace. This reemphasises what we have said about the need for their increased participation in political life.

We talked of the importance of the OSCE's approach to security, one that comprehensively recognises the full spectrum of root causes of conflict and instability, and of how to deal with these, was dully highlighted.

Earlier this morning, we witnessed important discussions on the role of MPs in fulfilling global commitments ahead of COP29, and in turn, on addressing the overall climate crisis. As parliamentarians, we are deeply aware of the threat that the climate crisis poses to global prosperity and development, and we must realise our active role in ensuring our climate commitments are met.

Finally, our third session discussed the ever so important issue of how to enhance migration governance in the OSCE region in order to foster long-term sustainable development.

During all of these sessions, we reflected on the active role that we, as members of National Parliaments with democratic legitimacy, play in building trust, in raising awareness and supporting parliamentarians to show courage and stand up to their leaders who inflict such tragedy on their neighbours and in turn on their own citizens. Let us remind ourselves that the role that we play in advancing and reinforcing the fundamental objectives of the OSCE is the key to its success.

Accordingly, despite all the challenges, crises, and uncertainty the world is currently going through, the last two days have given us enough evidence to demonstrate the active role of parliamentary diplomacy in working towards building bridges and promoting cooperation and genuine dialogue. By working together, OSCE parliamentarians can more effectively address common challenges affecting our region, making a real difference towards the realisation of peace and security.

To conclude my brief remarks, I reiterate my gratitude for the opportunity to join you today. I trust that the outcomes of the last two days will be taken up by Members of the Parliamentary Assembly and beyond, and bring us closer towards the OSCE's core values and objectives.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Thank you.