



**REPORT OF SECRETARY GENERAL
ROBERTO MONTELLA**

**TO THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE**

Updated version – 13 Feb. 2020

VIENNA, 20 FEBRUARY 2020

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) Winter Meeting, which takes place every February in Vienna, allows the PA and its Members to meet, exchange views and build synergies with the governmental side of our organization. The parliamentary and governmental sides of the OSCE are complementary one to the other and I am particularly grateful for the mutual support and excellent co-operation we have enjoyed in 2019 with the Slovak Chairmanship and we now enjoy with the Albanian Chairmanship. The combination of their two slogans – “*for people, dialogue and stability*” and “*implementing commitments together*” reflects very well the role of the PA: leveraging on the added values of parliamentary diplomacy to revive multilateralism and work for the benefit of our citizens who are, at the end of the day, the only real end users of the “OSCE product”.

As I begin the last year of my first mandate as OSCE PA Secretary General and following the decision of the Standing Committee in Luxemburg (July 2019) to grant me a second term from January 2021, I would like to use the opportunity of this report to **take stock of where our Assembly is and share also some personal reflections on where it is heading to**. To this end, you can find attached to this report the document “*Assess, Adapt, Advance: an organization on the move*” I have presented to the PA Bureau in December with a brief overview of achievements during my first mandate.

I - Activities

Since my last official report at our Autumn Meeting in Marrakech in October 2019, the OSCE PA has maintained a high pace of engagement. Outreach activities supported by the International Secretariat took place every week, in addition to other routine work undertaken by our staff. **President Tsereteli** conducted six **official Visits (Serbia, Albania, Armenia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the United States of America)** and traveled across the region on several other occasions to address or meet with OSCE counterparts as well as **key international partners, including the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Council of Europe and its parliamentary assembly (PACE)**. This in addition to the setting up and the running of three **Election Observation Missions (Belarus, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan)**, in coordination with ODIHR and external partners. Moreover, several **Special Representatives** held targeted meetings with respective stakeholders and participated in a number of international conferences. The **Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism** organized a **visit to Norway** and various other Members took part on behalf of the Assembly in relevant international events. Particularly through the Vienna Liaison Office, we have also continued to ensure an extensive PA participation at all levels in **OSCE events**, including the Ministerial Council, the Annual Meeting of the Chairmanship with Institutions and Field Operations, the Annual Anti-Semitism Conference, and many others.

A **comprehensive list of activities** undertaken during the reporting period is annexed to the report for easy reference.

II – Achievements and Objectives

Without entering into the merit of each one of the above-mentioned activities, which I leave to the reports of those directly concerned, I would like to highlight **two major results**: firstly, our recognized presence on a wide range of key topics on the international security agenda and, secondly, our excellent co-operation and interaction with OSCE participating States, executive structures and Institutions.

As a matter of fact, the **increased engagement of our Bureau members** and the new impetus given by our President with the appointment of Special Representatives have, from an operational perspective, complemented the valuable work of our General Committees and allowed the Assembly to position itself as a **stakeholder on a number of important international priorities**. Interestingly enough, the Assembly's efforts and dedication have created a **virtuous circle**: on the one side, they have generated interest and broad recognition regarding the added value of parliamentary diplomacy – the testimonies of our President in front of the US Helsinki Commission, the expressed determination and generosity of participating States to host our statutory meetings and other conferences, as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Office for Countering Terrorism are just a few of many other illustrative examples. On the other side, they are in turn also demanding us to increase our targets. This is a privilege and a great achievement which however also bears responsibilities, which I will refer to later in the report.

The second noteworthy achievement is the **excellent co-operation we continue to enjoy with the OSCE executive structures**. The general perception regarding the added value of our Parliamentary Assembly is increasing. We will therefore continue to complement the work of the Governmental branch with sense of collective responsibility and in a non-competitive mode so as to maximize the OSCE's overarching response to the wide array of challenges inflicting upon the OSCE region. Such a co-operation takes place on a daily basis at multiple levels, including through the Vienna Liaison Office. It is often made of silent diplomacy, but it is a tireless work that ensures that the OSCE family is acting and delivering to its citizens as **one organization**. Some examples include regular coordination meetings on key political and programmatic issues, joint statements and projects, the one side looking for the other to add value to its activities, reciprocal feedbacks on outcomes of high-level visits and other important events, and our active participation in the OSCE early warning focal points network. In this spirit, I will myself host in August an informal retreat of OSCE Heads of Institution, who I thank for the excellent relationship we enjoy, with the aim of addressing, in an honest and brainstorming fashion, the state of the organization and its way forward.

I assess this as a very good standpoint for the OSCE PA and I am proud of the cruising speed we have reached. However, especially in the light of the new achievements, we have to work on its **sustainability**, and, to this end, **further strategic planning is needed for the longer term**.

The growth of our activities is continuing to challenge our finances and human resources. Being present simultaneously on a wide spectrum of stages is something we want to preserve and, if possible, strengthen. However, it is key for us to identify our priorities and focus our commitment in those activities where the PA can truly provide a distinct parliamentary added value. This is why, during our recent Bureau Meeting in Bratislava in December, I have asked our political leadership for guidance: we reached a good level of engagement, but we now have to maintain the pace and optimize our impact. The potential of the OSCE PA is huge for three reasons: two are permanent features, and are the general service of parliamentary diplomacy to provide a **useful platform for dialogue**, especially in the current challenging geopolitical scenario, and the ability to **mobilize national Parliaments**, leveraging on their institutional oversight and legislative functions, to promote the visibility of the OSCE and to support the implementation of international commitments, including PA resolutions; the third is a contingent one, namely the capability of our Assembly to step in and **play a more important role given the current challenges affecting the OSCE governmental side** - abuse of consensus rule and high mistrust between participating States - which is preventing the organization from taking many decisions of the utmost importance, including adopting a budget.

Longer term projects based on the comparative advantage of the PA are currently being studied by my staff. For instance, we are planning to set up **a project** to work more intensively at the parliamentary level, including with national delegations, **on post-EOM recommendations, particularly in the legislative field**. We are also analyzing the possibility of organizing **visits of our Members to OSCE Field Operations** in order to explore how we could provide a stronger contribution to the work of the OSCE on the ground. These are just two of the many examples of how we could continue to boost or activities while at the same time being more targeted.

III – Administration

As you will read more in detail in the report of our Treasurer, for the second year in a row all 57 OSCE participating States have contributed to our yearly budget in a timely fashion and I am extremely grateful for the continued support we receive from all Parliaments in our Assembly.

Following our two last Annual Sessions in Berlin and Luxembourg, the Assembly is undergoing a **process of revision and clarification of its Rules of Procedure** and the International Secretariat has continued to work hard to support **Lord Peter Bowness**, Vice-President and Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Working Practices, to this end. The Sub-Committee, in its new composition, met in Bratislava in December to discuss a number of issues particularly related to quorum procedures and supplementary items. The Sub-Committee has subsequently put forward proposed changes related to supplementary items for consideration by the Standing Committee during this Winter Meeting, which would enable them to enter into force by the upcoming Annual Session in Vancouver.

As far as human resources are concerned, I wish to share several updates. Following the retirement of Deputy Secretary General Semyon Dzakhaev in December 2019, I have entrusted our Special Representative in Vienna, **Ambassador Andreas Nothelle**, with the title and functions of **Deputy Secretary General *ad interim*** until the process of appointing a successor, in line with the Rules of Procedure, will be completed. Moreover, at the beginning of this year we have welcomed in our Vienna Liaison Office **Ambassador Miodrag Panceski**, a long-serving career diplomat with extensive OSCE experience, including in the framework of the 2015 OSCE Chairmanship, who will serve as **Chief Diplomatic Advisor**, and **Ms. Hana Dogovic**, previously human rights officer in the OSCE Mission to Kosovo, who assumed her duties as **Programme Officer (JPO)**. Furthermore, **Ms. Stephanie Koltchanov** had joined our staff in Copenhagen in October as **Election Officer**, while **Ms. Anzhelika Ivanishcheva** assumed office in December as **Media Support Officer**, and **Ms. Freyja Koci** will join the Office of the Secretary General from March. Together with these five new entries, I have continued to optimize human resources within the International Secretariat, with some further position adjustments that try to balance growing needs with available resources.

In the coming months, acknowledging the both mentioned general increase of PA activities and the unprecedented level of interaction with OSCE executive structures, we are planning to find new premises for our Vienna Liaison Office, which is increasingly becoming a neuralgic center for our work.

IV – Upcoming months

The months ahead of us will continue to be engaging and demanding, leading us towards our Annual Session, the most important yearly event for the Assembly, which will take place from 3 to 7 July in Vancouver, Canada. 2020 will also be a record year in terms of election observation missions, with other ten being currently planned (among the confirmed ones: Serbia, North Macedonia, Belarus, Montenegro, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Georgia, United

States). Our Special Representative on fighting Corruption is organizing an important parliamentary conference on the topic in May in Cyprus, while the German Delegation is working hard for the annual Leinsweiler Seminar, yet another opportunity for parliamentary dialogue. Our President and his Special Representatives also have a busy agenda and the International Secretariat will, as usual, spare no efforts in supporting all such activities.

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In conclusion, I wish to express my gratitude to all the Members of the Bureau, the Standing Committee and the numerous Members of Delegations with whom I continue to enjoy a personal interaction and I thank them for approaching me with advice, suggestions, and proposals. I greatly value such personal interactions as well as the friendly environment we managed to build in our Assembly. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the members of the Staff in Copenhagen and Vienna, including our Research Assistants, for their commitment, professionalism and teamwork. We will continue to ensure that the priorities set by our political leadership are duly addressed and implemented, and that co-operation with all our partners and stakeholders – both inside and outside the OSCE framework – runs smoothly and productively.

Annex I – OSCE PA Activities during the reporting period October 2019 – February 2020

Presidential and SG Visit to Serbia	14-16 Oct. 2019
President Address to the IPU	17 Oct. 2019
Presidential and SG Visit to Europ. Parliament, PACE, Council of Europe	23-25 Oct. 2019
President Address to the European Conference of Speakers of Parliament	24 Oct. 2019
Vice-Presidential Address to Nordic Council, Stockholm	30 Oct. 2019
Special Representative on Arctic Issues meetings with Nordic Council	30 Oct. 2019
President Address to the OSCE Permanent Council	31 Oct. 2019
President, SG and Special Representative on Mediterranean Visit to Egypt	5-6 Nov. 2019
Needs Assessment Mission (electoral) to Serbia	11-16 Nov. 2019
Special Rep. on fighting Corruption Visit to OECD and Council of Europe	11-14 Nov. 2019
Ad Hoc Com. on count. Terrorism Address to OSCE Security Committee	11 Nov. 2019
SG Meeting with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities	13 Nov. 2019
SG Meeting with the OSCE CiO Pers. Representative on Anti-Semitism	13 Nov. 2019
SG Address to the HCNM Conference in Lund on National Minorities	14 Nov. 2019
Election Observation Mission to Belarus	14-18 Nov. 2019
Presidential and SG Visit to Albania	18 Nov. 2019
Statutory pre-assessment Visit to Bucharest (Annual Session 2021)	19-21 Nov. 2019
Participation in ODIHR meeting on election observation organization	20-21 Nov. 2019
Presidential Visit to Armenia	25-26 Nov. 2019
CCT Contribution to PAM countering terrorism conference, Rome	29 Nov. 2019
Meeting of PA Sub-Com. on Rules of Procedure and Working practices	4 Dec. 2019
OSCE PA Bureau Meeting	4 Dec. 2019
OSCE Ministerial Council	5-6 Dec. 2019
Statutory Meeting Pre-Assessment Visit to Dublin (Autumn Meeting 21)	9-11 Dec. 2019
Needs Assessment Mission (electoral) to Tajikistan	9-12 Dec. 2019
Special Representative on Arctic Issues Address to PACE Meeting	16 Dec. 2019
Presidential Visit to Ukraine	17-18 Dec. 2019
Election Observation Mission to Uzbekistan	19-23 Dec. 2019
Opening of OSCE 2020 Albanian Chairmanship and related meetings	9-10 Jan. 2020
Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism Visit to Norway	14-15 Jan. 2020
3 rd Committee leadership Visit to the Bundestag, Berlin	15 Jan. 2020
President Address to the OSCE Permanent Council	16 Jan. 2020
Special Rapporteur on Digital Agenda Visit to Denmark	20-21 Jan. 2020
Presidential Visit to Azerbaijan	30-31 Jan. 2020
Signature of Memorandum of Understanding with UNOCT	3 Feb. 2020
US Seminar for Young Parliamentarians	3-4 Feb. 2020
Presidential and SG Visit to the United States of America	3-7 Feb. 2020
Vice-Presidential Address to OSCE Chairm. Anti-Semitism Conference	4-5 Feb
Election Observation Mission to Azerbaijan	5-10 Feb. 2020
Contribution to the OSCE-UNOCT Conference on FTFs, Vienna	11 Feb. 2020
Special Rep on fighting Corruption contribution to EEF prep. meeting	17-18 Feb. 2020

This table refers to the outreach activities conducted by the International Secretariat autonomously or in direct support to PA Members. It does not include daily and office-based work on a number of further projects and activities. It also does not include the daily liaison work conducted in Vienna and the active participation in the OSCE Permanent Council and its committees, the Forum for Security and Co-operation (FSC), and several other OSCE conferences and working groups.

Annex II – “Assess, Adapt, Advance: on Organization on the move” OSCE PA 2016-2019

Co-operation

- Excellent co-operation and regular exchanges with **OSCE executive structures** at all levels (coordination on activities, positions, statements, etc., reciprocal invitations to meetings, PA in ministerial documents)
- Excellent co-operation with **EOM partners** (reforms in EOM coordination, informal brainstorming, exchanges, etc., leadership role well recognized)
- External Co-operation: regular exchanges with **partner organizations** and concrete steps (e.g. MoU with UNOCT)

Targeted activities

- Two “**ad hoc**” **Committees** to deal with current crucial issues (migration and terrorism)
- **Special Representatives and Rapporteurs** dealing with emerging pressing issues in the political debate (5 new ones in the last year: combating corruption, Arctic issues, Digital Agenda, Fake news and disinformation, Civil Society engagement)
- **Distinct parliamentary contributions** (e.g. oversight initiative on terrorism, HDIM side event)

Engagement

- Every week at least one OSCE PA member or official is engaged in a **public activity**
- **Consistent high participation** to statutory meetings and election observation missions
- Request to change standard agendas and meeting formats to allow more time/room for **debate** due to highest demand

Reachout

- First time organizing a PA statutory meeting in a **Partner State** (Morocco)
- **New areas** of election observation (e.g. Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Italy, Germany)

- Continued careful attention to contribution of **small states** (e.g. San Marino: hosting AM, Special Rapporteur and Presidential visit; Andorra hosting AM; Presidential visit to the Holy See)

Internal Reforms

- Rules of procedure (ongoing process): **continuous revision and adaptation**
- EOM Code of Conduct and guidelines: **more transparency**
- Gender (objective of **bridging gender gap** – individuation of a gender mainstreaming strategy to be implemented in the Secretariat, Bureau, EOMs, etc. – e.g. success in EOMs leadership – women 50% in last two years)
- New Staff Rules
- New Financial rules and regulations

Staff

- 4 Secondments
- Introduction of Junior Professional Officers (2)
- Staff structure reform (departments, lines of reporting, etc.)
- MoU with OSCE Academy in Bishkek regarding Internships
- Staff participation to OSCE and external training programmes

Media

- **New Media strategy** (philosophy of amplifying Members' voices through press releases, increased focus on social media channels, increased production of profession videos, including video news releases e.g. EOM Belarus)
- **OSCE PA App**
- Modern redesign of website, brochures and News from Copenhagen