



REPORT OF OSCE PA SECRETARY GENERAL  
ROBERTO MONTELLA  
31st ANNUAL SESSION



Bucharest, 29 June  
2024

With the multitude of challenges facing the OSCE region, I remain convinced that the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is more important today than ever. As our populations feel more and more insecurity in their daily lives, **the need for parliamentarians to help tackle the major international questions only increases**. And I'm proud that the OSCE PA continues to deliver on this need. Whether the insecurity is a result of war, as in Russia's attack on Ukraine, or climate change, or irregular migration, or malicious use of artificial intelligence, our Assembly contributes in substantive ways to international understanding and solutions.

In the International Secretariat that I'm pleased to lead we are very aware that parliamentary dialogue, and the time and commitment of our Members are the Assembly's most important resources. The dedication of Members, and the generous support of parliaments to host our work, are critical to enabling the Assembly to wield political influence far beyond what could be expected of an organization with a budget of only some 4,2 million Euro.

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

While there was a short-term reprieve to the OSCE's leadership crisis with the decision in December to extend the **Heads of OSCE executive structures** until September of this year, **the process of finding longer-term successors** is now underway. **The Maltese Chairpersonship of the OSCE should be applauded for their efforts to this end**, and OSCE PA President Pia Kauma has continued the OSCE PA's historical supporting role by encouraging Assembly Members to identify individuals with political experience and leadership qualities to apply for these positions. **Considering the gravity of the challenges facing the Organization, I hope that Members will take the opportunity of the Bucharest Session to consider together with colleagues how best we can contribute as an Assembly to strengthen stability within the OSCE.**

The OSCE PA Secretariat in Copenhagen and Vienna has been pleased to support a plethora of activities by Assembly Members who have been contributing to security within the region. Among others, our **Migration Committee headed by Daniela De Ridder** has continued its active work with two major **field visits to Italy and Türkiye** in recent months,

highlighting important challenges in both countries and particularly their efforts to care for vulnerable migrant groups. **Türkiye was also host to our ad hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, chaired by Reinhold Lopatka**, in a visit focused on sharing experiences in fighting violent extremism, which was followed by our participation in a major multilateral forum on counter-terror efforts.

**Individually, Assembly Members have taken time out of their schedules to contribute to solutions on important thematic concerns.** For example, President Kauma and **Special Representative Ben Cardin have actively engaged on issues related to anti-Semitism. Irene Charalambides** has similarly continued to ensure that the **Assembly's voice against corruption** remains prominent, including at a major OECD event in Paris recently. Our **Special Representative on Gender Issues Hedy Fry** has been holding **meetings with civil society representatives in Budapest, Chisinau and Bucharest** to better assess the gender equality in the OSCE region and understand how the OSCE PA can play a role to support efforts in various countries. On the eve of our meeting in Bucharest, **Pere Joan Pons** will be contributing to an international conference on climate change in Malta, just as **Azay Guliyev** will be **representing the Assembly at the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.**

I warmly welcome the work of the **Portuguese Parliament in organizing a very successful conference focused on security in the age of artificial intelligence in May.** The OSCE PA Secretariat was very pleased to support this effort, which gathered some 70 parliamentarians for discussions on a topic which is playing a more and more important role in all our lives. **The Leinsweiler Seminar**, hosted **in April** by the German Delegation and organized by our Secretariat, served as an additional opportunity for a number of parliamentarians to actively engage in discussion on priority regional concerns. In addition, **the Network of Young Parliamentarians** has actively worked to ensure that the voices of young people are heard within the Assembly, with young parliamentarians hosting a series of consultation workshops in their national parliaments to gather feedback from young people on the most pressing security issues in the OSCE area.

**Reflecting the many region-specific challenges, Assembly Members have been active across the Eurasian landmass on**

**OSCE topics.** Most notably, our **Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine** has continued its active engagement on highlighting the immense challenges facing our friends in Ukraine as a result of Russia's invasion and considering how best our Assembly can contribute. Work by President Kauma and Special Representative **Joe Wilson** on behalf of OSCE staff members illegally detained by Russia has also been appreciated by the OSCE and their families. The situation in the Middle East continues to be discussed intensively within the Assembly, with President Kauma leading discussions also with other fora in the Mediterranean and Pascal Allizard visiting the Mediterranean region as Special Representative, and we have been working to include the Middle East as a prominent agenda item for our Bucharest Session. As Special Representative, **Farah Karimi led a high-level visit to Central Asia together with Pere Joan Pons and Gudrun Kugler** and colleagues from the region, focused on challenges related to climate change and water scarcity in **Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In South East Europe, Special Representative Kyriakos Hadjiyianni** convened a first landmark forum aimed at strengthening collaboration among parliamentarians in the region. **Mark Pritchard** has continued his work to ensure that Assembly **work on Arctic affairs** remains high on the agenda, including through visits to Norway and participation in important international fora.

**Election observation continues to be a field in which the OSCE PA plays a leadership role**, most notably recently with **Nikoloz Samkharadze** and **Carina Odebrink** leading a strong team of observers in **North Macedonia** in May. **Farah Karimi** also shared Assembly experiences in discussing electoral reform together with OSCE experts and diplomats in May. Looking to the future, I anticipate that Assembly resources will be seriously strained with multiple elections of interest taking place **in October and November this year, including in Moldova, Georgia, Uzbekistan and the United States**, but I am confident that with careful planning the OSCE PA Secretariat will continue to deliver quality services and meet Members' expectations.

These activities represent only a small part of Members' and Secretariat efforts on behalf of the Assembly in recent months, but the breadth of this work is indicative of the vibrancy of our Assembly. **At a time of serious crisis and diminished capacity on the OSCE Governmental**

**side, I am proud and pleased that the Parliamentary Assembly continues to actively embody the OSCE's founding principles.** Our Vienna Office will continue to reflect the OSCE PA's vibrancy in their liaison activities with counterparts throughout OSCE structures. To further strengthen Assembly support for the OSCE overall, the OSCE PA Secretariat has already started planning a programme through which OSCE PA Members will be invited to visit and learn more about OSCE field operations. President Kauma and Bureau Members have also demonstrated bold leadership in embarking upon in-depth discussions on Assembly structures and work, to ensure that the Assembly is well-adapted to play a substantive and leading role in the OSCE for years to come. Under Pascal Allizard's Chairmanship, the Rules Committee has already started work to follow-up on these discussions with practical implementation proposals.

## **Budgetary and Secretariat administrative matters**

Just as populations across the OSCE region have been feeling the effects of rising living costs and economic challenges, the Assembly is having to deal with significant inflationary pressures. The impact of this is compounded by the Russian Federation's decision not to pay its dues for the second year, resulting in a shortfall of some 6% compared to budgeted income. While these circumstances have presented difficulties, **great care in managing resources and identifying efficiencies has enabled the OSCE PA Secretariat to continue and even increase activities in some fields.** For the coming year **we have worked very closely with Treasurer Johan Buser to put together a proposed budget that meets the desires of national parliaments for continued activities, while still representing only a minimal dues increase overall.** I thank the Treasurer, who has been supported in this process by the President, for his care and diligence in ensuring the Assembly stays on a sound fiscal setting. The Treasurer's recent visit to meet with OSCE Executive and Governmental representatives in Vienna attests to his strong commitment to ensuring that the Assembly exploits all options to secure our financial and administrative functioning.

We remain conscious that Russia's decision not to contribute to the Assembly will likely continue to represent a shortfall in our budget. The Secretariat will persist in its cost-saving efforts to mitigate the impact

of this missing contribution, and I am confident that we can continue to provide high quality services and support a high level of activities. However, additional income will likely be needed to bridge the gap. The generosity of the Parliament of Luxembourg, which has pledged extra-budgetary funds to support our regional work, represents a strong contribution to this effort. The International Secretariat will continue our work to identify additional funding sources, so that Russia's withholding of funds does not overly damage the Assembly's important work. The Armenian and Romanian parliaments have provided additional immense contributions to our work this past year by hosting our major meetings, as have the Danish parliament and Austrian government in continuing to host our Secretariat offices year after year.

On an administrative level, we have continued measures to strengthen the OSCE PA's Secretariat in Copenhagen and Vienna. Recent measures such as the implementation of a performance appraisal system, and modernized travel authorization processes should improve our cost efficiency and overall delivery of services to parliamentarians. In response to calls by the Assembly for enhanced staff retention measures, we have also worked with an external human resources professional with extensive expertise in job classification processes. It is hoped that in the future this work can result in further clarity of staff structures, and, with the approval of the Standing Committee, bring Secretariat compensation closer to that of comparable organizations.

## **Audit**

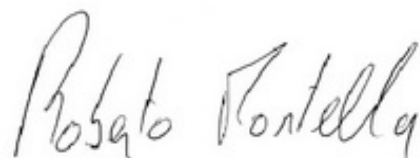
In preparation for the end of our fiscal year on 30 September, the OSCE PA Secretariat will be preparing all appropriate information for our external auditors at Deloitte and opening our books to their experts. We look forward to working with them not only on an audit of our finances, but also the extended business performance management audit following the agreement earlier this year to standardize this process. While the International Secretariat has always – for some 30 years – received audit opinions that contained no qualifications that would indicate concern, **I was pleased to note that earlier this year Deloitte's high praise of our financial management also extended to the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the Secretariat.** In the future, we will continue to pay close attention to their external advice on

our work, to ensure that we always deliver professional and cost-effective services to the Assembly.

## Concluding comments

The OSCE PA Secretariat has demonstrated our ability to effectively deliver on the priorities of OSCE parliamentarians year after year. **This is a genuine team effort, and I'm proud of the commitment and dedication that all of my colleagues in Copenhagen and Vienna, including our team of highly-qualified research assistants, put into their work on behalf of the OSCE PA.** Our team has regularly shown remarkable flexibility in adapting to new and changing circumstances and consistently providing sage advice and effective services. I believe that this unique group of individuals should be applauded for their work, and I hope that the OSCE PA will continue to provide them with a stable working environment within which they can thrive. **Needless to say, it is also my hope to continue to enjoy parliamentarians' confidence and to personally lead this effective team in the coming years,** contributing to our overall efforts to deliver for the OSCE and all populations represented in the Assembly.

Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
Roberto Montella  
Bucharest, 29 June 2024



## Assembly's Activities



### Number of Activities 2010-2017 vs 2018-\*2024



Total number of Activities  
2010- 2017: 465

Total number of Activities  
2018-\*2024: 639

**INCREASE BY**

**37 %**



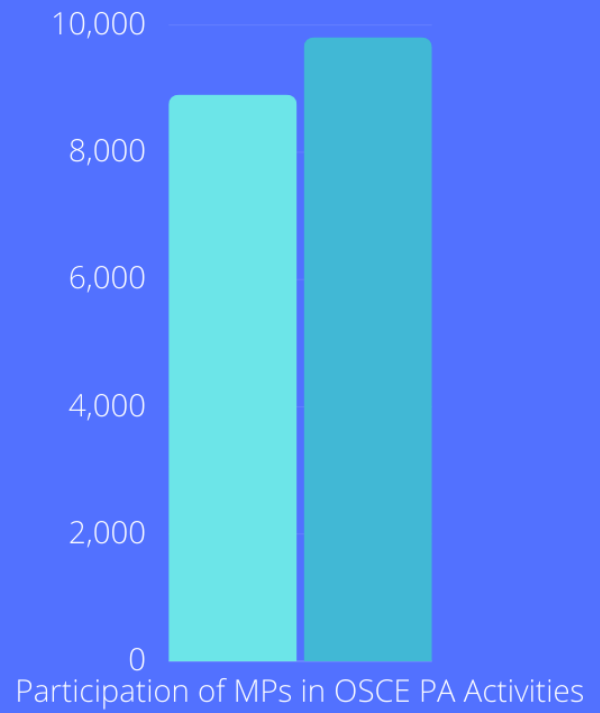
Total number of MPs participated in OSCE PA Activities

2010 - 2017: 8910

Total number of MPs participated in OSCE PA Activities

2018 - \*2024: 9811

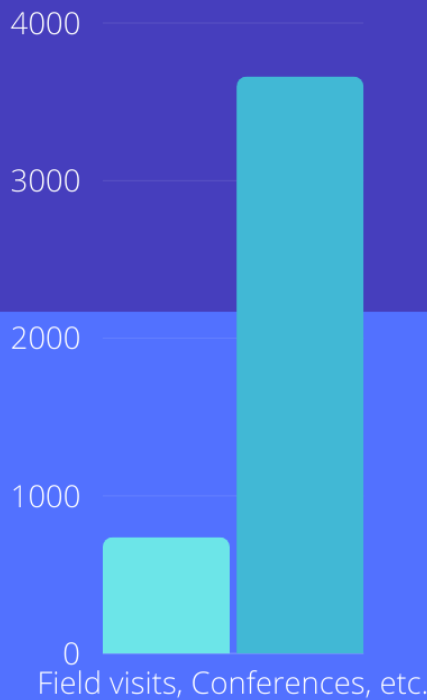
**INCREASE BY**



2010-2017

2018-\*2024

**INCREASE BY**



Total number of MPs participated in OSCE PA field visits, conferences etc. 2010- 2017: 739

Total number of MPs participated in OSCE PA field visits, conferences etc. 2018-\*2024: 3661

**\* information as of June 2024**

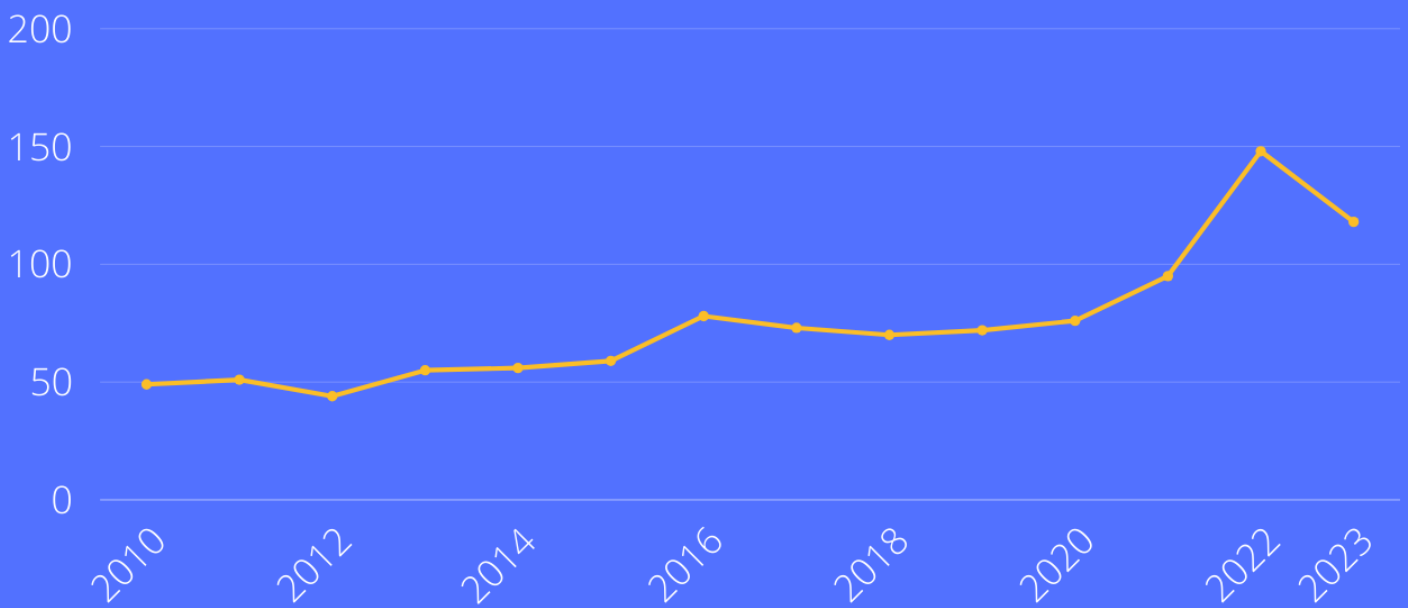


# Assembly's Activities



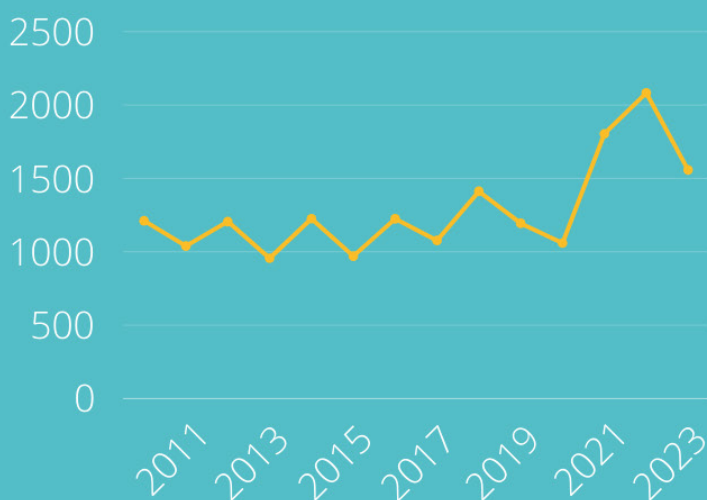
Number of Activities per year 2010 – 2023

Everything You Want to Know



**"Flexibility and adaption are some of the OSCE PA's greatest assets. I am proud that the Assembly is fully operative in all its key mandated activities, carving its functionality to respond to challenges and remaining engaged and on target on the most pressing issues of the international security agenda."**

## Total participation of MPs in OSCE PA Activities 2010 – 2023



## Total participation of MPs in OSCE PA Activities 2020 – 2023

