



SPEECH OF THE TREASURER

Mr. Johan Büser

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

Porto, 29 June 2025

Speech of the Treasurer – Johan Büser

OSCE PA Annual Session, Porto, 29 June 2025

Dear colleagues,

As we open the Annual Session here in Porto, I find myself at the conclusion of my first term as Treasurer. It has been an honour to serve the Assembly during a time when financial and organizational matters have been particularly visible—perhaps more so than at any other time in our Assembly’s recent history.

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We have faced a difficult environment—both financially and politically. And the continued failure of the Russian Federation to meet its financial obligations has only deepened these challenges. This situation has forced us to rethink our budgeting practices, enhance our auditing procedures, and ensure that every euro we spend is aligned with the priorities of this Assembly.

I am sincerely proud of the work we have done together. When I was elected Treasurer in Vancouver in 2023, the Assembly adopted a resolution calling for regular performance audits. That mandate has been taken seriously and a number of organizational reforms have been implemented. Today, the OSCE PA conducts both annual financial and performance audits. More structured and robust auditing

procedures have been introduced over the past two years, bringing us into line with other parliamentary assemblies and the OSCE.

During the term, I have also asked for the Bureau's support to strengthen our financial regulations with clarifications that provide for more constructive and targeted auditing procedures.

In the eye of political and structural challenges, it is my conviction that our organization deserves to be strengthened to withstand the pressure. And the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is being strengthened by enhanced transparency, openness and accountability in our operations.

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But let us be honest: even with these reforms, we cannot avoid the structural problems caused by the non-payment of assessed contributions. Over the past three years, the Russian Federation has failed to pay a cumulative amount of more than €760,000. These funds are not symbolic. They are essential to our work. They support our staff, our meetings, our missions, and ultimately, our ability to fulfill the democratic oversight function that is the core of this Assembly.

This financial pressure has forced us to rely more heavily on our reserves. And the depletion of our reserves poses a real risk to our long-term financial stability. We cannot rely indefinitely on voluntary contributions or on financial improvisation to sustain our work. Budgetary leadership and continued efforts to ensure stability will therefore be of utmost importance also in the future. ‘

I must also underscore the importance of compliance with Rule 41.5: *where a participating State fails to contribute for more than nine months, its delegation forfeits voting rights*. This is not merely a procedural formality—it is a measure designed to protect the integrity of this institution.

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In line with Rule 41.1 of the Rules of Procedure, a draft budget proposal was sent out on 23 April. I have received correspondence from at least two delegations opposing the proposed budget increase. As the budget requires consensus-minus-one in the Standing Committee to be accepted, a revised budget proposal has been sent out reflecting zero nominal growth. The updated budget maintains the overall amount at €4,373,000—the same level as the previous financial year.

The revised budget proposal ensures budgetary stability, but it will nevertheless impact the Assembly's operational and institutional capacities. I have asked the Secretary-General to develop a contingency plan in order to strike the right balance and make sure that the Assembly's interests are taken into account in the best possible way.

The implementation of a zero nominal growth budget will commence after the closing of the Annual Session by the Treasurer.

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Despite all of these difficulties, I remain encouraged by the commitment I have seen across this Assembly. I am deeply grateful to Secretary General Roberto Montella, Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares, and the outstanding staff of the International Secretariat for their hard work and creative solutions in the face of these pressures.

I also want to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the national delegations contributing beyond the obligated dues. Your contributions to the Assembly are invaluable, whether it is additional financial support, secondment of staff or by hosting the Assembly's meeting and events. A detailed list of all extra-budgetary contributions can be found in the updated Treasurer's report.

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Together, we have kept the Assembly not only operational, but dynamic and relevant. We have expanded election observation, responded to geopolitical developments, and ensured that parliamentary diplomacy remains a cornerstone of the OSCE.

Let us now move forward with a shared understanding: that sound finances are not separate from our political mission — they are what make that mission possible. Thank you.