

**Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
24-25 February 2022**

**Report of the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Margareta Cederfelt**

Reporting period: 1 November 2021 - 15 February 2022

Dear Members,

We gather for our 2022 Winter Meeting two full years after our last fully in-person statutory meeting. While I had initially hoped that this would be the first occasion for us to meet again in greater numbers, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and limits our ability to convene in Vienna at this time. However, I am glad that we were able to gather most Members of our Bureau and to participate in the Ministerial Council in Stockholm in person, despite some restrictions. The presence in Vienna of Members of the Standing Committee, our Special Representatives, and the Chairs of our Ad Hoc Committees, along with the online participation of as many Members as possible, will further contribute to maintaining our Parliamentary Assembly as a **unique forum for open discussions on European security**.

In this reporting period, which spans from our last Autumn Meeting to the middle of February, I have continued to focus on **key priorities** in line with my presidential duties to **implement the responsibilities and objectives** of our Parliamentary Assembly.

For months now, the **military build-up in and around Ukraine** has dramatically escalated tensions in the OSCE region. On this issue, the position of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is clear and has been reiterated on numerous occasions since 2014. Our Declarations have consistently condemned violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and we have repeatedly called for a comprehensive settlement of the



At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Stockholm



*Meeting with Ukrainian Head of Delegation
Mykyta Poturaiev*



*Meeting with Valentina Matviyenko,
Chairwoman of the Federation Council of the
Russian Federation*

conflict based on a full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. In this context, I note that the various discussions that have taken place, including in Geneva, Brussels, Paris, and in Berlin, have had the merit of confronting divergences at the diplomatic table rather than through military maneuvers. We must continue to encourage these high-level consultations to carry on regularly.

Nevertheless, as I underlined during the Stockholm Ministerial Council and more recently at the Permanent Council in Vienna, **immediate de-escalation is an urgent and necessary step to engage in constructive dialogue on European security**. Rather than letting mistrust deepen dividing lines, it is important that our governments engage in frank and honest discussions to **fulfill the vision of the Helsinki Final Act** and contribute to peace, security, and justice in Europe and the continuing development of friendly relations and co-operation among our participating States.

The issues at hand are complex and necessitate patience and diplomacy. They also require greater inclusivity to ensure that the voices of all those concerned are indeed heard. I remain convinced that **the OSCE is the most useful platform to reinforce European security in a comprehensive and inclusive manner**. As a matter of fact, the OSCE already provides all the tools needed to address the issues at hand. For instance, the Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building offers concrete measures to promote greater military-to-military dialogue, prevent incidents, and ensure more transparency on military maneuvers. Renewed efforts are necessary to support its modernization and application. Likewise, we must reaffirm the importance of the Open Skies Treaty, which has been a cornerstone of the European security architecture and continues to provide added value to our common security. Consultations through the Structured Dialogue can also pave the way for greater mutual understanding and reverse the deterioration of European security. We must also carry on strengthening the OSCE's implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda to achieve long-lasting peace and stability.



With U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken



During the Bureau meeting in Stockholm in December 2021



Meeting with OSCE Secretary General Helga Schmid in Vienna, January 2022

Our Organization's unique approach to security requires that our Parliamentary Assembly does its best to **support the OSCE's work**. All three dimensions are interrelated and, if we are serious about achieving lasting security in Europe, we have to give them equal care and equal commitment. In this regard, I am pleased that the OSCE PA has continued to be active on many fronts by organizing online seminars on topical issues.

I have also been vocal to **not let the OSCE become an organization "à la carte"** by encouraging a permanent crisis of the OSCE's human dimension. We need to address the failure to hold the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in 2021 by fully exploiting our oversight role. This is why I have asked all PA Members to question their Ministers about the steps taken to avert or rectify this situation. We must continue to demonstrate that **democracy delivers true security**, by engaging with all relevant stakeholders, including opposition figures, and by carrying on with our valuable mission to observe elections. In this spirit, I thank Members who, since our Autumn Meeting, have observed the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan and those who, this spring, will be deploying to Hungary and Serbia.

Strong support for the work of the OSCE also requires that all the moving parts of our Organization **pull together in the same direction**. I have been fortunate enough to build an excellent working relationship with the former Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde, during the first half of my presidential term, and I intend to work closely with the Polish Chairmanship in the run-up to our Annual Session. I met with several of your Foreign Ministers during the Ministerial Council Meeting in Stockholm.¹ On the margins of my latest address to the OSCE Permanent Council I also had the opportunity to meet with Secretary General Helga Schmid, Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro, the Director of the Conflict Prevention Center Tuula Yrjölä, as well as several Permanent



With Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, during an official visit with Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka and Vice-President Azay Guliyev



President Cederfelt with then-CiO Ann Linde during a joint visit to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 2021



With CiO Zbigniew Rau

¹ Including Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and the United States.

Representatives to the OSCE² to further explore areas where we can **deepen our co-operation and increase your impact**. Our Bureau has also reiterated support for the “Call for Action” which offers a space for discussion for parliamentarians and representatives of OSCE institutions, academia, and civil society to exchange on ways to make the OSCE more effective.

Our Parliamentary Assembly must also continue to serve as a **unique forum for dialogue on common challenges**. For instance, our last Autumn Meeting was the opportunity to explore the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and implications for the OSCE region following the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August 2021.

The security threats emanating from Afghanistan were one of several issues discussed on our official visit to Turkey (8-12 November 2021) together with Vice-President Azay Guliyev and Vice-President Reinhold Lopatka. Our Delegation underlined the need to engage constructively with Turkey, in a relationship based on trust and mutual respect, to allow our Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE as a whole to fulfil their role in crafting long-term and effective solutions to protect our common security, in particular the safe management of refugee flows and the effective prevention of terrorism and violent extremism. As we underlined then, the OSCE PA has a role to play in **promoting greater responsibility-sharing** between all OSCE participating States. We must also continue to encourage parliaments to play an active role in **protecting the fundamental pillars of a democratic society**, by ensuring that responses to security threats do not erode the rule of law, undermine the independence of the judiciary, and restrict freedom of expression.

My visit to the United States in December was useful to further underline that **strong transatlantic engagement** is necessary to craft comprehensive responses to promote peace and stability in the OSCE



With Vice-President Roger Wicker during the visit to the U.S. in December 2021



In a meeting with Speaker of Grand National Assembly of Turkey Mustafa Şentop



With Ambassador Alexander Lukashevich, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE

² Including Canada, the European Union, Germany, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

region. In meetings with Members and staff of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, as well as events hosted by the Atlantic Council and the Council on Foreign Relations, I had the opportunity to discuss the general state of European security, especially in light of the military build-up in and around Ukraine and the deterioration of the human rights situation in Belarus.

The security situation remains precarious throughout the wider OSCE region. As painfully illustrated by the events in Kazakhstan in early January, we must remain vigilant and continue to **work actively to reduce tensions within our societies and prevent potential violence** throughout the OSCE area. I had the opportunity to meet with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Mukhtar Tileuberdi, in January. I appreciate the efforts deployed by the authorities of Kazakhstan to inform the OSCE community of the measures taken in response to the unrest, and I look forward to the transparent findings of an official investigation. I have also welcomed the measures announced to **improve the socio-economic wellbeing** of the citizens of Kazakhstan, as well as **continued political reform**. These are areas where the OSCE, in particular the Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, can be useful.

The state of affairs in the OSCE region, characterized by deep tensions, calls on our Parliamentary Assembly to **continue deploying efforts and building bridges to facilitate dialogue on conflict-prone issues**. This is why, in the coming months, I plan on undertaking official visits to Moscow, Washington, DC, and Kyiv to reaffirm the added value of parliamentary diplomacy as a tool to enhance communication and trust. This will also be discussed next month in London, where I will travel to officialize the hosting of our 2022 Annual Session in Birmingham. Three years after our last Annual Session in-person, I look forward to us meeting again to debate and adopt action-oriented resolutions and a final declaration that can further guide the work of the OSCE and promote the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter.



With Vice-President Irene Charalambides during the 30th anniversary of ODIHR in Warsaw



With Vice-President Pia Kauma and Secretary General Roberto Montella during a visit to a Women's Resource Center in Tajikistan



With Secretary General Roberto Montella

Our collective success relies on the active engagement of all OSCE PA delegations and strong political support from the leadership of your national parliaments. As a word of conclusion, let me therefore voice again my sincere gratitude for your active participation in all our meetings and our activities in the field, despite the challenging circumstances. I also want to express my gratitude for the excellent assistance provided by the International Secretariat to support my activities as President and the wide array of projects carried out by Members to promote comprehensive security in the OSCE region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Cederfelt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'M' being large and prominent.

Margareta Cederfelt