

Report by OSCE PA President
Margareta Cederfelt
Winter Meeting of the OSCE PA



2023
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Dear Members,

For the first time since February 2020, Delegations are gathering again fully in-person for our Winter Meeting taking place at the seat of the OSCE. This has traditionally been the opportunity to tune into the work of the governmental side of our organization and reinforce our co-operation. Regretfully, we will also mark one year since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Over the last several months, there has been a great deal of discussion amongst OSCE PA Members over how to handle this Winter Meeting, and more particularly, whether our [long-standing commitment to parliamentary dialogue](#) warrants any form of engagement with the Russian Delegation, without preconditions. As with all our statutory meetings in the past year, our Winter Meeting must again demonstrate our united resolve to support the people of Ukraine in the face of such unprecedented, unprovoked, and unjustified war. It should not serve to [sow divisions](#) amongst those who have repeatedly demonstrated that support, in words and in deeds.

The situation the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly finds itself in requires a [vigorous debate](#), part of which took place in Warsaw when our Standing Committee considered the proposed introduction of suspension mechanism. At that time, our discussions underlined the need for additional consultations for consensus to emerge. As part of this process, I have therefore renewed the membership of the Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure with a view of carrying on with these deliberations within the framework of our existing Rules to formulate a new proposal.

Today there can be no dialogue with the Russian Federation. The past year has demonstrated Russia's blatant disregard for the Helsinki Principles and international law, which form the basis of our organization. Yet, as Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, it



is our mission to [defend the role of the OSCE](#). Today, the OSCE's strongest asset is its unique membership and our ability to confront one another around the same table. Our commitment to the OSCE as a pillar of the international security order requires from us that we use this platform, not that we abandon it. If direct engagement was thought possible at the height of the Cold War, it should also be possible today.

Our Winter Meeting must therefore be the opportunity for an overwhelming majority of our Members to [openly and vigorously confront the Russian Delegation](#) for their country's unjustified and unjustifiable war and crimes in Ukraine, and their own role in aiding and abetting them.

This would complement the actions taken by our governments during the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Lodz, during which I had the opportunity to exchange with several Foreign Ministers on the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. My latest address to the OSCE Permanent

Council, last month, also provided an opportunity to exchange thoughts on how to further [reinforce synergies with the executive structures of the OSCE](#), in line with the vision paper I presented to the Bureau in Warsaw.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's relevance and impact largely depends on the active engagement of our Delegations in our work. I welcome the opportunity for fruitful exchanges with our German colleagues in Berlin in December, including with various political factions. Our discussions underscored the need for [continued multilateral engagement](#) to contribute to ending the war waged by the Russian Federation on Ukraine. I look forward to listening to your thoughts and ideas in the run-up to our Annual Session in Vancouver. I will also continue to regularly exchange with interlocutors visiting Stockholm, as has recently been the case with Ukrainian civil society representatives and the President of the Moldovan parliament, Igor Grosu.

Evidently, there is a great desire within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to support Ukraine the best we can in this struggle for its independence, its sovereignty within its internationally-recognized





borders, and the dignity of its people. But in order to be efficient, we must be realistic about what our Parliamentary Assembly can achieve. Multiple avenues of engagement have been identified in my [Ukraine Action Plan](#), which has again been updated prior to our Winter Meeting, and which should drive our political action.

Nevertheless, we must remain aware of all the challenges dealt by the OSCE in all three dimensions of security. Although the war in Ukraine is on top of our political agenda, we should [maintain focus on other conflicts in our region and other areas of instability](#), for instance Afghanistan. The recent devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria are also a sombre reminder that major crises can arise unexpectedly.

I am grateful for the collegial work of our Bureau in recent months, which has continued to provide political direction and determine priorities. Regular consultations with the International Secretariat have also ensured a [high degree of coordination](#) in preparing for this Winter Meeting.

Margareta Cederfelt