

Report by OSCE PA President Margareta Cederfelt 30th Annual Session of the OSCE PA



2023
30 June – 4 July

Dear Members,

As we prepare for our 30th Annual Session in Vancouver, **Ukraine's existential struggle** to recover its full independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity remains at the top of our political agenda. Prior to our last meeting in Vienna, there were vigorous debates as to whether our **long-standing commitment to parliamentary dialogue** warranted any form of engagement with the Russian Delegation. In the light of the Russian Federation's continued **complete disregard for our common values and principles**, this question remains.

Yet, our Winter Meeting confounded the most negative prognosis. When some feared that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly would provide an unrestricted platform for propaganda, we demonstrated the **resolve to support Ukraine** in the face of such an unprecedented, unprovoked, and unjustified war. When others sought to expose cracks and divisions, we demonstrated **indisputable unity**.

As such, our Winter Meeting was a resounding success which must inspire our political debates in Vancouver. We must continue to **defend the OSCE**. Even though dialogue is not possible today, we must therefore make sure that tomorrow we are still able to rely on this **distinct platform** to rebuild comprehensive security in our region.

Evidently, the OSCE is a unique actor amongst European regional organizations thanks to its **membership**. This is a message I brought with me through several visits to **Central Asia** over the course of my presidency. In this reporting period, I had the opportunity to return to **Kazakhstan** twice, including as part of our election observation efforts. I also had the distinct honour to be the first OSCE PA President to visit **Turkmenistan** in more than a decade. Both these visits stressed the importance of inter-parliamentary dialogue as an essential tool for building and maintaining trust between OSCE participating States.

I also raised the need for **strong inter-parliamentary and inter-institutional co-operation** in Reykjavik, in the context of Iceland's chairpersonship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and ahead of the Fourth Council of Europe summit. Likewise, we must carry on with our collective efforts to promote **continued multilateral engagement** to end the war, rebuild European security, and uphold international law.

The discussions which took place during the Leinsweiler Seminar, hosted by the German Delegation to the OSCE PA with support from the German Foreign Office,



further stressed that **informal exchanges amongst parliamentarians** are necessary to chart a path forward for European security.

In Berlin, through the OSCE's experience in South East Europe, in Moldova, and in Ukraine, we underlined the vital support **Field Operations** are providing to national authorities, civil society, and other actors in many OSCE participating States, as well as their contribution to early warning and conflict prevention. As I witnessed first hand at the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, these missions are the most visible face of the OSCE for our citizens. We must therefore carry on demanding that – just as the rest of the OSCE – these missions be empowered with **adequate and sustainable funding** as well as **strong and effective mandates**.

Indeed, our organization will remain relevant tomorrow only if it can rely on a robust field presence supporting the OSCE concept of comprehensive and co-operative security. On that account, parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in maintaining equal importance between the OSCE's three dimensions of security. The **Baku** conference on "The role of national parliaments in promoting security and stability



through green economy, connectivity and sustainable development," jointly organized with the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan, was a major step in this endeavour. As we have tragically seen in Ukraine with the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam and subsequent floods in Kherson Oblast, the dramatic implications of the Russian Federation's ongoing war in Ukraine for the economic and environmental security across the OSCE region urge us to **find comprehensive solutions to our interconnected security challenges.**

In the same vein, I have advocated a **greater role for women and youth** in international affairs. I am proud that our Informal gender network and our network of young parliamentarians have established **new spaces** for these important voices to be heard. As I underlined at the Global Parliamentary Congress "The Future of the World" in Vilnius we must continue to encourage those least represented in our parliaments – women, young people, minorities – to **take on more responsibilities** to better prepare for tomorrow.

Nevertheless, the extremely worrying situation in which the OSCE finds itself at this critical juncture, in particular the absence of consensus regarding which OSCE participating State should hold the 2024 Chairmanship, compels us to **raise political support** to ensure the continuity of OSCE processes and operations. We have continued to do so through a series of thought-provoking events in the framework of the **Call for Action / Helsinki+50 initiative** in Vienna, in Ashgabat, and on the web. This also goes hand in hand with opportunities to raise greater awareness about all available OSCE instruments, as discussed with the President of the **OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.**

Because the current international situation also has a direct practical impact on our operations, I have taken part in several discussions regarding the **OSCE PA's financial planning** to determine how to best balance our political ambitions, an ever-growing engagement of our Members, the impact of high inflation on our staff and our activities, and the decision of certain National Delegations to withhold their contributions. I have also steered a proposal to undertake a **business audit** of the administrative functions of the OSCE PA, which has been discussed by our Bureau and will be brought for consideration by the Standing Committee during our Annual Session. In Vancouver, the Standing Committee will also be invited to consider **amendment to our Rules of Procedure**, which have been under discussion since the start of the year.

As a word of conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank all our parliamentarians and staff for their support over the course of my presidency. This has been essential to support an ambitious programme of activities in the difficult context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian Federation's attempt to overthrow the European security order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margareta Cederfelt".

Margareta Cederfelt