

REPORT OF OSCE PA PRESIDENT PIA KAUMA  
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING



29 June  
2024

Dear colleagues,

Our Annual Session In Bucharest represents the culmination of the Assembly's work over the past year. As we prepare to meet for five days of intense work which will **empower our Assembly** with a renewed leadership and strong political messaging, I would like to **thank the Parliament of Romania** for the financial and administrative efforts invested to ensure the success of this event and for its commitment to advancing dialogue and co-operation within the OSCE framework.

At our last statutory meeting in Vienna, I was pleased to see that all the debates enabled constructive exchanges on **current key priorities, both within and beyond the OSCE region**. I was personally reassured to witness undisputed convergence on retaining Russia's war against Ukraine high on the Assembly's agenda, while also preserving active engagement in South-East Europe, the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Our discussions also reiterated concerns about developments in the Mediterranean and more specifically the Middle East, which again will be the focus of a debate in Bucharest.

As demonstrated throughout the past twelve months, our Assembly is a vibrant forum with Members eager to enhance the work of the OSCE. Our willingness to tackle many of the security challenges facing our region can sometimes be constrained by the format of our meetings. Efforts have already been made to **recalibrate the work of the Assembly** to better reflect the variety of challenges affecting the OSCE. Answering the Russian aggression against Ukraine, of course, remains a top priority. The creation of the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine by the Standing Committee in Vancouver has for instance provided a new space to discuss all issues related to Ukraine. In turn, this has helped reallocate additional time at our statutory meetings to debate other issues of interest to our Members. Indeed, a significant portion of our debates in Yerevan and in Vienna addressed security challenges in other parts of the OSCE, namely the South Caucasus and the Middle East.

In parallel to the Maltese Chairpersonship of the OSCE, I applaud the efforts made by our Assembly to **refocus on the Mediterranean region**. Visits by the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration (to Italy and Türkiye), by the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (to Türkiye), and by the Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs (to Cyprus) have all given greater attention to the challenges stemming from this region. In addition to my participation in visits to Italy and Türkiye, I was able to

exchange with the Delegation of Malta on these issues on the margins of my participation in the OSCE Conference on Combating Antisemitism. I followed up on this by participating in the Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), where I met with representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and the Palestinian Legislative Council to explore avenues for parliamentary contributions to aid resolving the ongoing crisis in the Middle East.

This spring has also been defined by several **OSCE PA events co-organized with Member Parliaments**. I was pleased to see many Delegations participating in the Lisbon Conference on “Security in the Age of Artificial Intelligence,” which provided our Assembly the opportunity to reflect on the multifaceted challenges posed by AI. I thank the Parliament of Portugal for relaunching this cycle of conferences, which had been halted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and I already look forward to returning to Portugal for our 2025 Annual Session in Porto. The Leinsweiler Seminar, co-organized with the Bundestag and the German Federal Foreign Office, was a space to discuss the role of the OSCE in the context of the Russian Federation’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine, but also security challenges in the South Caucasus and Baltic regions.

The Leinsweiler Seminar also served to draw upon the past experiences and work of the OSCE to **help define a way forward for the Organization** as it again needs to find consensus to appoint a new Secretary General and Heads of Institution prior to the expiration of the incumbents’ mandates in September. This has complemented the informal brainstorming sessions with Members of the Bureau which have been a useful exercise to impulse some **longer term strategic thinking** into the work of the Assembly, outside of our regular one-year cycle revolving around the Annual Session. These discussions have already resulted in a proposal to extend the term of the next OSCE PA President to two years, non-renewable. This will be considered by the Standing Committee during our Autumn Meeting in Dublin and would apply from the 2025 Annual Session.

Against the backdrop of another potential leadership vacuum in the OSCE executive structures, I triggered this spring the process to **renew incumbent Secretary General Roberto Montella’s mandate** for another term. The Bureau’s endorsement for this proposal reflects his excellent track record in serving the OSCE PA in very challenging times, whilst making our Assembly more active, relevant, visible, and effective.

I am convinced that our Annual Session in Bucharest will help identify

solutions to the deep institutional crisis in which the OSCE has been for the better part of the past decade. Our debates and the Declaration resulting from our collective work should also serve to **safeguard, strengthen, and advocate for the various OSCE instruments** which are at the disposal of all participating States. In the context of strong domestic and international reactions to the consideration by the Georgian parliament of the law “on transparency of foreign influence,” exchanges with Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze for instance helped trigger a review of the draft law by the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Finally, let me thank our Treasurer, Johan Büser, and our Secretary General, Roberto Montella, for the fruitful conversations which have led to the proposed draft budget for the Financial Year 2024-2025 to be approved by the Standing Committee in Bucharest. I believe that this balanced proposal, which was unanimously endorsed by the Bureau, will allow our Assembly to continue to make a positive contribution to the work of the OSCE. Following up on my pledge to help manage the Assembly’s financial challenges in the short to medium terms, I have worked with the OSCE PA Secretariat to explore **additional voluntary contributions from Member Parliaments**. I am pleased to announce that this month I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Parliament of Luxembourg to finance a multi-year project, starting from 1 January 2025, which will supplement our budget and ensure our continued active engagement in South-East and Eastern Europe. Combined with the support provided by Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Italy through host agreements and secondments, as well as the additional voluntary contributions from Estonia, Iceland, and San Marino, this initiative will significantly bolster our financial stability and will enable us to maintain a high level of activities in the years to come.

President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Pia Kauma

Bucharest, 29 June 2024

