

OSCE PA Web Event: “The 30th Anniversary of the Charter of Paris: a Parliamentary Perspective”

20 November 2020

Introductory remarks by OSCE PA President George Tsereteli

Merci, chere Sereine.

Madam Minister,

Mr. Vice-Minister,

Dear participants, dear colleagues,

Thank you all for joining us today as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris.

As we will discuss today, this is a visionary document which, during the incredible upheavals of the early 1990s and mere weeks after the reunification of Germany, includes some of the strongest and most direct principles adopted by our participating States.

For the past 30 years, the Charter of Paris has given a new meaning to European security and has guided the work of the OSCE.

It tasked us with working together towards the fulfilment of universal aspirations of men and women throughout the OSCE region: “democracy based on human rights and freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries.”

But despite the enthusiasm and optimism of the time, let us not forget that the leaders who signed this document were fully aware of the challenges laying ahead.

They knew that eliminating the threat of major war did not rule out the possibility of conflict in Europe. They were aware that some sources of tension would emerge or re-emerge, and that the abuse of fundamental rights and freedoms would persist.

Thirty years later, in this exceptional year, we see the disruptive powers of international and transnational challenges.

As our countries and populations continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to protect our citizens against the threat of violent

extremism and terrorism, find ways to safely manage migrant and refugee flows, and urgently address the threat of climate change.

The upheavals induced by the pandemic have offered a renewed opportunity to reflect in-depth on the history and role of our Organization, and on ways to promote more effective multilateral co-operation.

In this context, we must continue to fully exploit the potential of parliamentary diplomacy, as outlined in the Charter of Paris, as an inclusive and constructive tool to break political deadlock.

We must also remain outspoken in our commitment for more transparency and accountability within the OSCE as a way to make the Organization stronger and more effective.

In order to consolidate the achievements of the OSCE over the last three decades, we parliamentarians have an important job to do.

Through our participation in events and missions in the field, we raise the visibility of the entire Organization.

And back home we must continue to talk to our Governments in order to bring back much needed high-level political attention to the OSCE.

I hope that today's event can generate reflections that will help stimulate the work of the OSCE, and reinvigorate our Organization in these challenging times.

Thank you.