



## The President

To: Heads of National Delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,  
Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

CC: Secretaries of National Delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

18 November 2021

Dear Colleagues,

The OSCE's contribution to our collective security and the overall wellbeing of our populations is well known, even beyond the borders of our region. I don't need to convince you of the value or importance of the Organization's work; the OSCE has many successes to its credit. In recognizing the successes of the Organization, we must also, however, acknowledge the failures that occur and work to understand them. It is in this regard that I write to you today.

Last month should have seen the convening of the OSCE's 2021 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), as a key opportunity to review human rights implementation in advance of the OSCE Foreign Ministers' meeting in Stockholm next month. As Europe's largest annual human rights and democracy meeting, the HDIM typically brings together more than 1500 government officials, parliamentarians, international experts, national human rights institutions, civil society representatives and human rights activists to review how OSCE states are implementing their commitments in the human dimension. In other words, are OSCE countries respecting the core values that promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, no such meeting took place, with our diplomatic representatives to the OSCE unable to reach agreement this year on the topics, agenda, and modalities for this very important meeting.

This is a failure. And I believe that the lack of agreement on HDIM should be addressed as a crisis for human rights and democracy protection and monitoring within our region. In order to prevent this serious setback from continuing and turning into an ongoing crisis, I think it is important that we try to fully understand what policies are in place and what efforts each of our governments put into reaching agreement on holding this key forum for advancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I therefore write to you as a parliamentary colleague, and request that you use your position in parliament to officially ask your Minister for Foreign Affairs about the steps taken by your government to avert or to rectify the failure to hold the 2021 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. In case it is of use, I attach to this letter what I am asking of my own

## The President

Government in Sweden, and would encourage Members in each national delegation to submit similar questions, in accordance with your own parliamentary procedures. Any responses received by the end of 2021 are kindly requested to be sent to the International Secretariat (Claire-Marie Beyet; [claire-marie.beyet@oscepa.dk](mailto:claire-marie.beyet@oscepa.dk)) for analysis and to support efforts in coming years. In the immediate term, however, discussion of this communal failure should also be at the centre of discussions during the OSCE Ministerial Council to be held on 2-3 December in Stockholm. I ask that you therefore encourage your Minister to give a full accounting of your government's efforts to contribute to agreement on holding the 2021 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in their statement to the Council.

Whether we are Members of the governing party or in opposition, I am sure that we would all like to understand the dynamics behind this very serious situation. By making use of this parliamentary approach in a co-ordinated fashion, I hope that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly can offer a real contribution to the OSCE's future diplomatic efforts.

Thank you for your support on this fundamental topic. I consider it to be a great honour to preside over the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, which I know is an organization of great significance to many of us. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Margareta Cederfelt

## The President

Question by MP Margareta Cederfelt to Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden:

As the Minister knows, the OSCE's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is Europe's largest annual human rights conference. Each year, the conference brings together hundreds of government officials, parliamentarians, international experts, civil society representatives and human rights activists to take stock of how OSCE countries, including our own, are implementing their human rights commitments. As participating States of the OSCE, we have all acknowledged that full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the development of societies based on pluralistic democracy and the rule of law are prerequisites for lasting peace, security, and co-operation in Europe. The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is a vital tool to ensure that we do not stray from these objectives.

As a Member of the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly I was therefore extremely disappointed to learn that this year, diplomats to the OSCE did not manage to reach agreement on holding this critically important event, which should have taken place last month.

My questions to the Minister are:

- 1) what steps did this Government take to seek agreement on convening this key meeting, both bilaterally with other OSCE countries and multilaterally;
- 2) will the Minister give a full accounting of these efforts in the Minister's statement to the OSCE Ministerial Council on 2-3 December in Stockholm; and
- 3) if similar diplomatic blockages occur in the future, what does this government propose as a mechanism to hold both our own as well as other countries publicly accountable for human rights commitments agreed through the OSCE and other international arrangements?