



31st Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Bucharest, Romania | 29 June 2024

Opening address by OSCE PA President Pia Kauma

President CIUCA,

Vice-President BARNA,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honorable Delegates,

Following the insightful words from our esteemed Romanian hosts, it is my distinct honor to address you to conclude our opening session.

We gather this week in a country with a profound commitment to peace and stability through multilateralism, enriched by a profound literary and philosophical tradition.

This Annual Session in Bucharest should draw inspiration from Romania's enduring dedication to fostering harmony and co-operation, as articulated by Mihai Eminescu: "For in this world, there is nothing more valuable than peace and harmony."

These principles must resonate deeply as we confront the complex challenges facing our region and beyond.

For over a decade, our Assembly has stood resolutely with Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression.

The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine remain non-negotiable.

Our unwavering support is a testament to our collective commitment to upholding international law and order.

The courage and resilience demonstrated by the Ukrainian people are inspiring.

This week, our Annual Session will reaffirm our full commitment to providing our friends with the political, humanitarian, and economic support they need during these trying times.

Dear colleagues,

This Annual Session marks the culmination of a year-long cycle which this year has been particularly marked by the war between Israel and Hamas.

Our Autumn and our Winter Meeting have already provided opportunities for you to exchange views on this conflict, and to discuss its profound implications for security within the OSCE region.

The horror of October 7th and the ongoing loss of life in Gaza are tragedies that weigh heavily on our hearts.

The tensions in our societies, highlighted by the alarming rise in anti-Semitic incidents across all OSCE participating States, demand our immediate attention.

Equally pressing are other potential precursors of even greater violence and conflict – an escalation of hate crimes, violent extremism, and islamophobia.

As parliamentarians and direct representatives of our constituents, it is incumbent upon us to proactively identify these issues.

We must actively contribute to finding viable solutions.

Our laws need to help mitigate these rising challenges.

Our membership in this Assembly should guide us towards a holistic approach to security.

Security is not just about the absence of armed conflicts.

True security also requires economic stability and a safe, sustainable environment.

It hinges upon human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

Looking at neighboring Moldova, we see that progress towards the full and sustainable settlement of conflicts is a long and arduous process

As Marti Ahtisaari said: “Peace is a never-ending process.”

Realizing the promise of the OSCE therefore requires our continued focus and attention, from the Western Balkans to the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Dear Members of the OSCE PA,

Amid all our shared challenges, we find opportunities for growing co-operation.

The Annual Session is a time to form partnerships that can be instrumental in promoting stability in your countries and regions.

By capitalizing on these opportunities, you are contributing to the broader goals of the OSCE.

Enriched by our conversations in Bucharest, our work must continue back in our capitals.

We need to maintain a high level of political attention on the Organization itself.

We need to ensure that it is equipped with adequate financial resources to fulfil the mandate it has been entrusted with.

This Annual Session must also focus on identifying solutions to the institutional problems in the governmental side of the OSCE.

We need to support the efforts of the Maltese chairpersonship to find consensus on those called to lead the executive structures.

Without strong leadership, the OSCE cannot deliver on its mandate effectively, and the recommendations we will make in the coming days in Bucharest may lose momentum.

We need strong, capable leadership to navigate the complexities of our time.

I therefore also urge all members to follow the deliberations through their foreign ministries to agree on a new OSCE Secretary General and new Heads of OSCE Institutions.

Your political attention can help find a solution and renew the OSCE, enabling it to once again play a major role in conflict resolution in our region.

As we look ahead to the fiftieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025, we are reminded of the enduring importance of dialogue, co-operation, and the shared principles that unite us.

This milestone must be an opportunity to reinvigorate our commitment to the OSCE's foundational values.

In conclusion, let me once again extend my sincere gratitude to the Parliament of Romania for hosting this Annual Session.

I am sure that your hospitality and support will provide a conducive environment for these important conversations.

Thank you.