



Address by Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA
OSCE Ministerial Council
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**Mr. Chair,
Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is an honor to address you today in Valletta.

Let me begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to Malta and to Minister Borg.

A year ago, you stepped up with extraordinary resolve to chair the OSCE.

Despite the short notice, you have steered this organization through turbulent waters with skill and dedication.

On behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, thank you.

I look forward to the future.

As a Finn, I am particularly proud that Finland will chair the OSCE in 2025.

This milestone offers a unique opportunity for strong co-operation between the Chairpersonship and the OSCE PA.

Together, we can reinforce the values and principles at the heart of this organization.

However, it is vital that we also look beyond 2025.

I encourage this Ministerial Council to take up the proposal made by Cyprus to chair the OSCE in 2027.

Yet, we still need a Chair in 2026 to ensure the Troika's ability to function effectively and provide the Organization with continuity.

While challenges remain on the horizon, the OSCE has demonstrated that consensus and collaboration can prevail.

The adoption of decisions on appointing the OSCE Heads of Institutions and during this Ministerial Council would also be a testament to our shared commitment to strengthening the Organization.

The stakes are high, but today we affirm that unity and decisive leadership can overcome division.

Mr. Chair,

I am pleased to be joined today by the OSCE PA Treasurer and four of our Vice-Presidents representing the parliaments of Sweden, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Ukraine.

Their presence reflects our parliaments' diehard commitment to the OSCE.

Back in our capitals, our Members continue to raise the profile of the OSCE, advocating for its work, and connecting with the citizens we serve.

This parliamentary engagement is vital for building public trust in the OSCE and reinforcing the link between our citizens and the principles we defend.

At the core of our mission are the shared principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

They remain non-negotiable.

They are the foundation of our collective security.

Peace and security are not just aspirations.

They are the indispensable bedrock of sustainable growth and future investment.

Without security for all, the very fabric of our shared progress unravels.

Security is not a privilege for a few but a necessity for everyone.

As Urho Kekkonen, President of Finland during the Helsinki Conference in 1975, wisely reminded us: “The willingness to compromise is a sign of strength, not weakness.”

Ministers,

The challenges we face today are daunting.

Foremost among them is the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine.

This war will end only when Russia withdraws its troops from Ukraine and respects the Helsinki Final Act.

I am encouraged by an openness to peace negotiations.

However, Ukraine alone has the right to determine the timing and terms of peace.

No part of its people, territory, or sovereignty can be sacrificed to appease those of us who, living in peace and security, grow weary of the economic and social consequences of war.

The Russian Federation must return to honoring the international order, treaties, and norms it has previously committed to.

When peace is achieved, the OSCE must be ready to take up its responsibilities.

Safeguarding peace and stability will require sustained effort, and rebuilding trust will take time.

Whether through monitoring, facilitating, or supporting the implementation of agreements, our Organization has both the expertise and the obligation to assist.

The OSCE stands prepared to play a vital role on the ground, helping to secure a durable and just peace.

The OSCE, together with global institutions like the United Nations, bears a solemn responsibility to defend international law and reinforce multilateralism as pillars of global stability.

To undermine these principles is to invite further chaos into an already turbulent world.

Ministers,

This autumn has underscored the OSCE's indispensable role in strengthening democratic resilience.

In 2024, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly achieved a significant milestone, completing its most active election observation season to date.

Over 500 observers were deployed across North America, Europe, and Central Asia - in Azerbaijan, North Macedonia, Moldova, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Moldova, and the United States - demonstrating our steadfast commitment to upholding democratic standards throughout the OSCE region.

In an era of increasing polarization, where political actors may preemptively challenge election outcomes as unfair when victory eludes them, the importance of election observation has never been greater.

The neutral, scientific, and well-tested methods employed in our missions are essential in countering such narratives and fostering public trust in electoral processes.

At the same time, we recognize the need to adapt and refine these methods to address emerging challenges such as AI-driven disinformation and deep fakes.

In doing so, we must also consider the broader context beyond the electoral period, ensuring that media practices, the protection of fundamental rights, and other essential democratic principles are upheld continuously, not just during election campaigns.

As election observers, we are committed to ensuring that the will of the people – not external influences from the east, west, or anywhere else – determines electoral outcomes.

These efforts, carried out in close co-operation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and our partners assemblies, have been instrumental in fostering public trust in democratic institutions.

They safeguard the principles that unite our countries and our people, ensuring a more stable and secure future.

Dear colleagues,

Our commitment to justice and human rights is being tested by the unjust detention and sentencing of Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov, staff of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

These actions violate the Russian Federation's international commitments, and I urge all OSCE participating States to support their immediate release.

Looking ahead, we must also prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, it is imperative that we look to the future with renewed purpose and vision.

Our region faces pressing and evolving challenges, including the pervasive threat of disinformation and the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence.

The OSCE PA is addressing these issues head-on, such as through policy innovation on AI.

We are also working to ensure that the needs of youth are better reflected in tackling modern challenges like climate change and conflict.

These efforts underscore our commitment to proactive, forward-looking leadership.

I firmly believe that parliamentary diplomacy can support your efforts by bridging divides, building trust, and strengthening co-operation.

Dialogue remains one of the most powerful tools at our disposal, even in the face of profound adversity.

It is through dialogue – anchored in our shared principles and a steadfast commitment to justice – that we can forge a lasting and durable path to peace.

Let us draw upon the strength of compromise and find common ground today to ensure that, tomorrow, the OSCE continues to work for our people and for peace.

Thank you.