



**OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President
Pere Joan Pons (MP, Spain)**

Address to the Verkhovna Rada

Kyiv, Ukraine | 7 October 2025

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Honourable Chairman Stefanchuk, esteemed members of the Verkhovna Rada,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to Chairman Stefanchuk, dear Ruslan, and to Secretary General Vischeslav Shtuchnyi for the generous invitation to visit Ukraine and to speak before the Verkhovna Rada.

This is my second visit since the beginning of Putin's aggression against Ukraine.

Today, I want to begin not only as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly — but also as a politician and Spanish parliamentarian.

236,000 Ukrainians have found shelter under the Temporary Protection Directive in my country. 326,000 people have been granted residence in our country. Because in moments of hardship, we open our doors. We stand together.

40,000 Ukrainian children are attending school in Spain.

They live, learn, and grow in safety — while your nation continues to defend itself with courage and dignity. That's why, first and foremost, I want to honor with all my heart every Ukrainian soul touched by this relentless tide of aggression since 2014.

Their courage, born from pain, lights a path for us toward justice, toward peace, and toward a shared hope that no darkness can ever extinguish.

Together, we stand united, committed to building a future where freedom and dignity are the birthright of every human being.

And united more than ever because under the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Ukraine's path toward EU membership officially began.

This year, Spain marks 40 years of membership in the European Union. That membership brought us stability, growth, and progress. The same will be true for Ukraine.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Europe stands with you.

Last week's Copenhagen Summit made that clear. There is a European Political Community standing beside you all. Security is now at the heart of all our regional policies. Europeans are concerned, and they know that your fight is our fight.

As President of an Assembly representing 323 parliamentarians and 57 participating States I say with confidence: We are united in this fight — because your fight is our fight.

You defend the universal values we all hold dear. You stand against an aggressor who shows no respect for those values, nor for international law, nor for the Geneva Conventions, nor for democracy.

Our democracy is first and foremost defended in Donetsk in Mariupol, in Luhansk, in Zaporizhzhia...

If you fail, we will fail....

Our Assembly is a platform — a huge political megaphone — for your struggle.

We use the tools we have: Unity. Principle. Dialogue. We fight with the strength of our arguments — not with the argument of force.

You are politicians, as I am. You know our greatest strength lies not in power, but in principle. We bring your voice and your voice to each of our parliaments.

Those principles place us — all of us — on the right side of history.

Because you, the people of Ukraine, have shown the world that Putin will not win this war. That democracy remains the most powerful antidote to tyranny. And that your struggle is the struggle of all free people.

Let me say this clearly: Russia's war against Ukraine is illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified. That is the language of our Assembly's Declarations, adopted with overwhelming consensus.

Since the beginning of my presidency, less than one hundred days ago, I have delivered the same message: President Putin must stop this war.

He must respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. And any peace — if it is to be real — must be agreed with Ukraine, never imposed on Ukraine.

Russia's aggression threatens more than your country. It threatens the stability of our international order. It undermines the principles that keep our region safe — and our people free.

Airspace violations in Poland, Romania, Estonia, Denmark, and Lithuania remind us all: This is not just Ukraine's war. This is all of ours.

As winter approaches, I remain deeply troubled by Russia's deliberate and systematic targeting of Ukraine's energy infrastructure. These actions are plunging millions into darkness and cold. Russia must understand the gravity of its conduct. Our Declarations have consistently referenced, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide from 1948, that Russian acts resemble genocide.

We remember the cost of defending democracy.

With great sorrow, I pay tribute to your former Chairman, Andrii Parubii, whose life was taken in this war. His memory and courage will not be forgotten.

Defending international law is not Ukraine's burden alone — it is our collective responsibility. Neglecting to invest in democracy inevitably comes at a cost. Russia has consequently lost its voting rights in our Assembly in accordance with our Rules of Procedure.

Today, our voice is Ukraine's voice.

And Support goes beyond words. In 2023, we established the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine, a dedicated body consolidating our Assembly's work.

Led by committed colleagues — including Co-Chair Mykyta Poturaiev — The team focuses on urgent issues like the abduction and deportation of Ukrainian children.

Let me be clear: Taking children from their homes, forcing assimilation and abuse — is not only a war crime, it is a moral emergency.

Our 2025 Porto Declaration calls for coordinated international action to ensure their safe return. And I would like to announce today that I will propose that our Assembly formally joins the International Coalition working to secure the Return of Ukrainian Children and ensure that Russia is held accountable.

We also recognize the war's profoundly gendered impact. Women in Ukraine have endured separation, trauma, and violence. They must be at the heart of Ukraine's recovery and future.

Our Assembly's commitment is not symbolic. It is part of our daily work.

And since my first day in Office, Ukraine was my top priority:

My very first phone call as President was with you, Chairman Stefanchuk — Showing how central Ukraine is to our agenda.

Despite war, restrictions, and loss, your delegation — led by Mykyta Poturaiev — shows relentless dedication, participating in every major debate.

We are grateful for the outstanding collaboration with your Mission in Vienna, led by Ambassador Yurii Vitrenko.

Last month, I addressed the OSCE Permanent Council to remind States that: Investing in the OSCE is investing in democracy. In the future of our children. When principles are under attack, we must defend them — clearly and firmly.

Looking ahead, our Assembly remains fully committed: To Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to justice and accountability for war crimes, to supporting Ukraine's democratic, European future.

At our Autumn Meeting in Istanbul, I will reaffirm this commitment. It would be an honour to welcome President Volodymyr Zelensky to address us there in Istanbul.

Chairman Stefanchuk, I warmly invite you to join us in Vienna in February 2026 for our Winter Meeting to deepen our parliamentary co-operation.

I thank you for the invitation to the Crimea Platform Summit in Stockholm. I confirm my participation and will say clearly: Crimea is Ukraine.

We demand the immediate release of the three OSCE officials unlawfully detained by Russia. Their detention violates international norms — and affronts the OSCE.

Our message will be taken to the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna this December,
Where we will again speak with one voice:
Ukraine's voice.

Let me end with a memory and a promise.

In 1937, the Spanish town of Guernica was bombed — One of Europe's first large-scale attacks on civilians.

President Zelensky evoked Guernica in the Spanish Parliament in 2022 — I evoke it here.

Because Guernica is not just a place. It is a warning. And a promise.

A warning of what happens when we stay silent.

A promise that we will not look away.

We will stand with those who choose freedom. Here in Ukraine, but also in Gaza and everywhere,
we will stand with those who defend dignity. We will stand — with Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini.