



Report of the OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia

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Head of the Delegation of Greece to the OSCE PA

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Dear President
Esteemed Colleagues,

It is an honour to have been appointed as the OSCE PA Special Representative on Central Asia in September 2025 for a two-year term. Allow me to share with you a few key takeaways from my activities and regional developments during the first year of my term.

Priority areas for strengthening regional cooperation and OSCE PA engagement

I continued the tradition launched in 2022 by then Special Representative on Central Asia Pia Kauma, and which was diligently maintained by my immediate predecessor, Farah Karimi, to facilitate exchanges between the five Central Asian delegations on the sidelines of OSCE PA Statutory Meetings. These co-ordination meetings were initiated in the context of the emergence of a new regional dynamic characterised by a spirit of co-operation and readiness among Central Asian states to jointly address shared challenges. They offer an invaluable opportunity for parliamentarians from Central Asia to share the issues they view as being of broader regional relevance and suggest topics that they wish to prioritise in their parliamentary relations with other Central Asian countries. They also provide the opportunity to exchange opinions about the added value of the OSCE and the OSCE PA as well as priority areas for OSCE PA engagement and support from the Special Representative.

The first co-ordination meeting which I hosted on 18 November 2025 in Istanbul on the sidelines of the Autumn Meeting was attended by parliamentarians from all five Central Asian countries as well as President Pons for whom engagement with Central Asia is a top priority. Strong support was expressed by my colleagues from Central Asia for the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly as a platform for dialogue and preventive diplomacy and for the continuation of these co-ordination meetings in the interest of strengthening regional co-operation.

I took note of a continued interest in pursuing the topics identified by my predecessor: regional co-operation to address environmental challenges and counter the impacts of climate change; and water diplomacy and enhancing co-operation on the management of joint water resources. The specific need to jointly address the environmental disaster

around the Aral Sea and to prevent a similar disaster in the Caspian Sea was also emphasized.

New topics still in the “second dimension” included: enhancing regional connectivity, trade and transportation links (this is an especially important topic for the landlocked Central Asian countries); fighting corruption; and enhancing digitalisation. Sustainable development is also a main priority.

Enhancing regional security, countering radicalisation and addressing threats emanating from Afghanistan were amongst the “first dimension” issues highlighted.

“Third dimension” topics mentioned included co-operation in the area of human rights; gender equality; the development of youth and civil society; promoting inclusive societies; and judiciary reform.

We continued our exchanges on the sidelines of the Winter Meeting in Vienna on 20 February. The five delegations reiterated their commitment to continued regional co-operation, highlighting climate change, transborder water resources, addressing the Aral Sea disaster, and enhancing the participation of women and youth, as priority topics. Connectivity again emerged as a promising new area for further co-operation. The delegation of Uzbekistan, which is planning to host a delegation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, added migration policy and labour mobility to the list. I also suggested the topic of constitutional and electoral reform.

While in Vienna, I also had the opportunity to meet with the five Heads of Permanent Missions to the OSCE who reiterated their support for the work of the OSCE PA and its Special Representative. The Ambassadors confirmed the interest of their respective governments in pursuing issues mostly within the “second dimension” such as climate change, fighting desertification, sustainable development of mountainous regions, glacier preservation, the management of joint water resources and enhancing regional connectivity, trade and communications. They also underlined that the resolution of the remaining border disputes in Central Asia has created a space for peace, integration and stability. At the same time, Afghanistan continues to pose a threat to regional security. They underlined the importance of fighting drug trafficking and irregular migration, while emphasizing that each country has adopted a different approach towards Afghanistan. Support was also expressed for parliamentary work in enhancing domestic legislation and adherence to international conventions as well as the importance of respecting international law.

I look forward to continuing my exchanges with colleagues from the delegations of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan who will be in The Hague on 4 July on the sidelines of the 33rd Annual Session and to continue our discussion on priorities and planned activities for the coming months.

I am also honoured to have been invited to address a side event organized on 6 July by the delegations of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, with the contribution of the other Central Asian delegations, on the topic of “Central Asia: A Platform for Strengthening Dialogue, Trust and Security in the OSCE Region and Beyond”. I encourage you all to attend this joint initiative which, in itself, sends an important and encouraging message about the direction in which regional co-operation in Central Asia is moving.

Regional Ecological Summit and High-Level Visit to Kazakhstan

From 22-23 April 2026, I joined a delegation consisting of President Pere Joan Pons, Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment Azay Guliyev and Secretary General Roberto Montella, to attend the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana, at the invitation of Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Yerlan Nyssanbayev. The Summit brought together over 1,500 participants, including representatives of governments, international organizations, development institutions, civil society, business and experts to advance a shared vision on climate change, water security and the green transition.

On the sidelines of the Summit, we participated in a roundtable on the topic of "Parliamentary Diplomacy for Climate Action and Sustainable Development: The Central Asian Perspective". This roundtable was jointly organized by the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the OSCE PA, the OSCE Programme Office in Astana and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan. It was moderated by OSCE PA Special Representative on Climate Change Ainur Argynbekova whose initiative it was in the first place. The roundtable brought together representatives of the Parliament and government of Kazakhstan, the OSCE PA, OSCE institutions, UNDP and parliamentary representatives from the region to discuss climate action, sustainable development, water security, regional co-operation and the role of parliamentary diplomacy in advancing practical responses to environmental challenges in Central Asia. In my remarks, I emphasized Central Asia's growing strategic role as a climate-resilient connectivity hub between Europe and Asia, pointing to the importance of sustainable infrastructure, green transport corridors and regional co-operation on green energy and digital transformation.

The discussions positioned the OSCE PA as a platform that can help connect national parliaments, regional priorities and international expertise, providing a basis for concrete follow-up areas. The main takeaways were as follows:

1. Climate change should continue to be addressed as a cross-cutting security, development and human rights challenge within the OSCE PA's work.
2. Water security and transboundary water co-operation offer a concrete area for further OSCE PA engagement. The proposals discussed at the roundtable, including a joint action plan on water resource management, regular consultations, meetings and field visits, could serve as practical follow-up measures.
3. The OSCE PA could support inter-parliamentary exchange on environmental and climate legislation. This could include comparative legal analysis, the development of model laws, expert exchanges and the establishment of a working group on climate adaptation, green energy and the digitalization of environmental governance.
4. Youth engagement and environmental education were identified as important areas for future co-operation. Young parliamentarians from Central Asian countries could be engaged as advocates for the environmental agenda, helping to connect parliamentary work with younger generations and long-term sustainability priorities.
5. Digitalization and artificial intelligence were linked to environmental governance and sustainable development. Future OSCE PA work could further explore the role

of digital tools in water data, environmental monitoring, climate adaptation and sustainable infrastructure planning.

Overall, this roundtable demonstrated the potential for continued co-operation between the OSCE PA, the Parliament of Kazakhstan, Central Asian parliaments, OSCE institutions, UNDP and other partners in advancing practical, results-oriented responses to climate and sustainable development challenges in the region.

While in Astana, my OSCE PA colleagues and I had the privilege to meet with high-level interlocutors including President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the Chair of the Senate and Head of the OSCE PA Delegation to Kazakhstan Maulen Ashimbayev; and Chair of the Mazhilis Yerlan Koshanov. Our exchanges focussed on strengthening inter-parliamentary co-operation, supporting ongoing political and economic reforms, and addressing shared regional challenges. Our delegation also met with representatives of the ministries of Water Resources and Irrigation; Energy; and Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development to discuss climate policy, water security, energy transition and regional co-operation. I also briefly exchanged with my EU counterpart, EU Special Representative for Central Asia Mr. Eduards Stiprais, on the sidelines of the Summit.

Our exchanges in Kazakhstan confirmed the need to further strengthen parliamentary ties on shared challenges such as water, energy, and environmental security. In my capacity as Special Representative, I am committed to supporting this dialogue and ensuring that the region's priorities are reflected in our work. We must build on this momentum – strengthening co-operation and continue translating shared priorities into concrete action.

The OSCE in Central Asia

The OSCE is doing an excellent job in Central Asia. It has had a long-standing presence in all five countries and is implementing impactful projects, in co-operation with national authorities, in all three dimensions of the OSCE. In addition, there is a Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe and an OSCE Academy in Bishkek – both of which are centres of excellence and invaluable resources not just for the Central Asian region but also beyond.

In April 2025 I joined the high-level OSCE PA to Tajikistan visit led by President Kauma. This was an excellent opportunity to learn more about the work of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and its co-operation with national authorities. I hope that this initiative will be continued and that we will have the opportunity to visit other field operations in Central Asia in the near future.

I would like to underscore the need to support these missions politically and financially. OSCE Field Operations have borne the brunt of the staff reductions following the adoption of the new OSCE budget which entailed unprecedented cuts for the Field Operations.

There have been discussions regarding the future direction of the OSCE's activities in Kazakhstan in particular, with a proposal by Kazakhstan on 11 March to reinforce the OSCE's capacity in the second dimension by establishing an "OSCE Regional Center on Sustainable Connectivity (RCSC)". I will continue to follow these developments and to express the support of the OSCE PA for the critical contribution of OSCE Field Operations on the ground in all three dimensions of the OSCE.

EOM to the November 2025 Early Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan

Last November I took part in the joint ODIHR/OSCE PA/PACE election observation mission to the early parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. These elections were held according to a fundamentally reformed legal framework, including a new majoritarian electoral system. The new gender representation quota is a positive first step towards enhancing the participation of women in parliament. As stated by the Head of the OSCE PA delegation Monika Zajkova, we encourage the authorities of Kyrgyzstan to build on this initial measure with sustained support and an enabling environment to advance genuine gender equality, as well as fair representation of all groups, including national minorities and persons with disabilities, throughout the political process.

In its Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions¹, the international election observation mission expressed concerns regarding media pluralism. It is regrettable that recent legal amendments that define election observation as a political activity and which make it mandatory for organizations with foreign funding to register as “foreign representatives”, as well as fears of retribution for these activities, have weakened the ability of civil society to participate in public life.

The OSCE PA stands ready to work with the parliament of Kyrgyzstan to implement the recommendations of the final report once it is published.

We continue to follow developments in Kyrgyzstan closely, in particular preparations for the presidential election scheduled for 27 January 2027.

EOM to the August 2026 Early Parliamentary Elections in Kazakhstan

The new Constitution of Kazakhstan adopted following the 15 March referendum came into force on 1 July 2026. That same day, the bi-cameral parliament of Kazakhstan was dissolved. Elections have been announced for 23 August to form a new, unicameral *Kurultai*. There are many other changes which will be implemented as a result of the new legal framework. I look forward to learning more about the impact of these further reforms and hope that the OSCE PA will be able to deploy a large mission to observe these important elections.

I also encourage my colleagues from Central Asian delegations to participate in OSCE PA election observation missions. Election observation is one of our flagship activities that allows parliamentarians to not only contribute to the important democratic processes with their unique political experience but also learn about electoral systems and international standards in the OSCE area.

¹ OSCE ODIHR, Kyrgyzstan, Early Parliamentary Elections, 30 November 2025: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions (1 December 2025), available at: <https://odihr.osce.org/odihr/660966>. See also the OSCE PA Press Release: “Kyrgyzstan’s parliamentary elections efficiently run but a restrictive campaign environment stifled public engagement, international observers say,” (1 December 2025), at: <https://www.oscepa.org/en/news-a-media/press-releases/2025/kyrgyzstans-parliamentary-elections-efficiently-run-but-a-restrictive-campaign-environment-stifled-public-engagement-international-observers-say>.

Upcoming Activities

The delegation of Turkmenistan has been very active these past years and has hosted two regional parliamentary conferences emphasizing the importance of multilateral diplomacy in addressing regional and global challenges. Last autumn, Turkmenistan hosted the eighth consultative meeting of Heads of State of Central Asia in a new format which also included Azerbaijan. Turkmenistan is proposing to host the traditional Ashgabat conference in November this year, possibly on the very timely topic of international law (Turkmenistan has asked the UN to declare 2028 as the “Year of International Law”). I am perhaps biased as this is my area of expertise but I am sure that we can agree on the need to reaffirm the importance of respecting the commitments undertaken by OSCE participating States under international law and to re-establish a rules-based international order. Turkmenistan has also expressed its readiness to host a meeting of the speakers of the five Central Asian countries and the OSCE PA President in the near future.

As a member of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, I also look forward to learning more about the experiences of the countries of Central Asia in enhancing labour mobility while ensuring that the development priorities of their own countries are met. The Committee has recently welcomed a new Member from Uzbekistan, Mr. Ulugbek Shermatov, and is planning a field visit there in October. Uzbekistan is of particular interest for the Committee as it has taken a number of important steps in recent years, including through the establishment of a dedicated Migration Agency in October 2024, towards developing a new model for managed migration while ensuring that the rights of its citizens abroad are protected. I am sure there are many lessons to be learned from the experience of Uzbekistan in this regard.

Concluding Remarks

The first year of my mandate as Special Representative on Central Asia has been not only immensely informative but also extremely rewarding, also on a personal level. Allow me to reiterate what a diverse, fascinating and important region Central Asia is. This is also a strategically highly significant region which, rightly so, is increasingly in the spotlight of the work of the OSCE across difference dimensions and portfolios.

I stand ready to channel these engagements and to contribute to strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation and the exchanges of best practice.

ANNEX I

Bio and Mandate of the Special Representative on Central Asia



ANGELOS SYRIGOS (GREECE)

Angelos Syrigos (Greece) was appointed as the Special Representative on Central Asia by OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons in September 2025.

Angelos Syrigos is a Member of the Hellenic Parliament and Professor of International Law and Foreign Policy at Panteion University. He was elected to Parliament in 2019 with New Democracy and currently serves as Head of the Greek Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Previously, he held the post of Deputy Minister of Education and Religious Affairs (2019–2023) and has published widely on international law, minority rights, and geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Mandate:

- Encourage active participation by parliamentarians from Central Asian OSCE participating States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) in the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to strengthen parliamentarism in the region;
- Liaise and support the work of the OSCE field missions in the region, as well as relevant OSCE institutions, international and regional organizations and diplomatic missions;
- Encourage closer contacts between the parliaments in the region to promote greater intra-regional cooperation in all three OSCE dimensions;
- Advise the President on developments in the region, including opportunities for enhanced parliamentary dialogue and further inter-parliamentary cooperation among the Central Asian OSCE participating States.

ANNEX II
Overview of Activities
(as of 1 July 2026)

A. Implemented Activities

- 18 November 2025 (Istanbul, OSCE PA Autumn Meeting): Co-ordination meeting of Central Asian OSCE PA Delegations, with the participation of Members from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and OSCE PA President Pons.
- 30 November 2025 (Bishkek): Participation in ODIHR/OSCE PA/PACE Election Observation Mission to Kyrgyzstan for the 30 November Early Parliamentary Elections.
- 18-19 February 2026 (Vienna, OSCE PA Winter Meeting): Bilateral meetings with Heads of Permanent Missions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to the OSCE in Vienna.
- 20 February 2026 (Vienna, OSCE PA Winter Meeting): Co-ordination meeting of Central Asian OSCE PA Delegations, with the participation of Members from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- 22-23 April 2026 (Astana): Participation in the [Regional Ecological Summit 2026](#) (RES 2026), including an OSCE PA roundtable on "Parliamentary Diplomacy for Climate Action and Sustainable Development: The Central Asian Perspective" (22 April) as well as high-level bilateral meetings with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev; Chairman of the Senate Maulen Ashimbayev; Chairman of the Mazhilis Yerlan Koshanov; Minister of Energy Yerlan Akkenzhenov; Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation Nurzhan Nurzhigitov; Vice-Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development Zhaslan Madiyev; and EU Special Representative for Central Asia Mr. Eduards Stiprais. The OSCE PA delegation consisted of: OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons; Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment Azay Guliyev; OSCE PA Special Representative on Climate Change Ainur Argynbekova; and OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella.

B. Upcoming Activities

- 4 July 2026 (The Hague, 33rd OSCE PA Annual Session): Co-ordination meeting of Central Asia delegations
- 6 July 2026 (The Hague, 33rd OSCE PA Annual Session): Participation in side-event organized by the delegations of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan "Central Asia: A Platform for Strengthening Dialogue, Trust and Security in the OSCE Region and Beyond".
- October 2026 (Tashkent, Samarkand): Participation in a field visit to Uzbekistan, together with the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration (tbc)
- Autumn 2026 (Ashgabat): Participation in an international conference hosted by the Mejlis of Turkmenistan (tbc)