

OSCE Group of Friends of Mediation –meeting

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Honorable ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the invitation to attend this important event. Also let me extend my gratitude to the OSCE delegations of Finland, Switzerland and Turkey for their active approach that has made the work of OSCE Group of Friends of mediation possible and has also positively contributed to stepping up the role of mediation within the OSCE.

Today's meeting allows us a great opportunity to have a fruitful discussion and brainstorming on where mediation stands today and how could we further develop it within OSCE as well as in a cooperation with other relevant organizations.

I am particularly pleased to address you today, for the first time, in my new capacity as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on Mediation. I was privileged to accept my appointment since I consider peace mediation as an increasingly important method to address global security challenges, also in our own continent – in our own security environment. In this respect, the role of the OSCE is more decisive than maybe ever before.

I welcome the increased cooperation in mediation related efforts of OSCE. At the same time, I am certain that there is a great potential within OSCE to enhance its mediation capacity even further – let me assure you that I will be dedicated to this work in my current capacity. Given that dialogue is the hallmark of the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly, there couldn't be better place to further mediation efforts and facilitate dialogue than in the Parliamentary Assembly.

The number of conflicts has risen over the past decade worldwide, unfortunately also in the OSCE area. This poses a great challenge for international communities and national governments. Having this in mind, we cannot overlook the role of mediation in peace processes.

Peace mediation, despite its limits as we have just witnessed in the case of Syria, is one of the most effective methods of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. Most importantly, it is a cost-effective way to prevent human destruction and loss of lives that are caused by conflicts.

I would like to use this opportunity to reflect some thoughts that I consider important in the mediation work:

First of all, all mediation efforts need to be always based on professionalism. Peace mediation is of course a complex issue that requires both political analysis and professional methods. Successful mediation also requires that all sides of a conflict have an opportunity to participate the process. If these premises are met, there usually is faith in the process itself.

In contemporary world, all disputes and conflicts are unique and specific in their nature. Therefore, we cannot have a narrow perspective in addressing them. We have good practices to be followed, but at the same time it is important acknowledge that there is no one solution that fits all. Peace mediation requires an open, inclusive and comprehensive approach.

The complexity of conflicts requires us to be agile and to have a versatile toolbox to work with. We need more sophisticated ways to address the pressing issues. To highlight one important element in our toolbox, let me mention the role of women in peace processes. Despite women's role as fighters, peacemakers and activists, many times women have been underestimated or ignored during negotiations and perceived as the passive victims of war. When it comes to peace and security, it is vital to ensure that decisions and solutions reflect the needs and views of the majority of a population.

Secondly, efficient mediation is dependent on proper resourcing. There is an increasing number of actors working with peace processes, but at the same time resources invested in mediation are limited. Therefore, coherence and cooperation between different actors are key elements in the mediation work.

It is vital to have a common view and strategy on how to further peace mediation efforts and work in the ground. Only after formulating the common strategy, it is possible to agree upon a clear division of labor based on comparative advantage among actors operating at the versatile levels.

In order to achieve all this, we need active dialogue and cooperation. As the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Mediation, I will be paying a lot of attention to enhancing collaboration and ties not only between OSCE PA and the governmental side of the organization but also in between OSCE and other relevant international actors dealing with mediation activities, including civil society actors such as CMI, one of the most prominent actors.

There are already great examples of the fruitful collaboration between OSCE PA and the governmental side of the OSCE that we can build upon in the future. Just to mention few concrete and successful examples of this cooperation, I would like to recall two peace mediation seminars that have been already organized this year: one in Helsinki in May and another one in Tbilisi in July that was organized in the margins of the PA's 25th Annual Session.

In order to make good use of available resources, we have to avoid overlapping and focus on building synergies. Therefore, it is important to have a continuous dialogue with other international organizations working with peace mediation. For instance, the United Nations is an

obvious partner for OSCE in this field. Last week I had a fruitful exchange of views with the UN colleagues in New York as regards peace mediation efforts and possible areas for collaboration.

We had a fruitful discussion in the Political Department of UN with the Director of European Division, Mr. Levent Bilman. Mr. Bilman had a very positive attitude towards the work of groups of friends of mediation. He underlined that UN collects experiences of the peace mediation and stressed the need to strengthen the capacity and number of peace mediation experts in the name of stand-by team of experts. Mr. Bilman expressed UN's readiness to further collaborate with the OSCE. Also I am delighted to mention that there are a lot of positive expectations towards the term of new UN Secretary General, Mr. Guterres, as regards the peace mediation work.

Also UN has enhanced its operational readiness to implement and support mediation efforts. As a conclusion, the collaboration between UN and OSCE is already working well but there is potential to step it up to the next level. I look forward to continuing discussions also with other key organizations.

Thirdly it is important to stress the role of conflict prevention and early warning mechanisms. Timely political analysis and excellent situation awareness on the international security situation are key elements in order to address and tackle emerging crisis and conflicts accordingly. As an ideal case, an emerging conflict could be prevented by implementing proper advance measures. As none of us has a crystal ball to foresee the future evolvments in the international security environment, the only thing we can do is to channel enough resources and attention to early warning mechanisms and conflict prevention.

Through my remarks I have highlighted few general issues that are important for peace mediation work. Now I would like to take my remarks into a more concrete level. I am certain that we all can agree that there is an urgent need to intensify efforts in resolving protracted conflicts in the OSCE region. Peace mediation has potential to play an important role in supporting on-going conflict settlement processes.

Ukraine is, of course, high on our common agenda at the moment. Cyprus should also be mentioned as important developments have taken place in the settlement process. However, let me take the Republic of Moldova as a case example among the conflicts in the OSCE region. Transdniestrian conflict deserves our continued attention for obvious reasons.

OSCE PA has closely followed developments in Moldova over the last years and keep on doing so. As a concrete sign of its work in Moldova, the PA established an ad-hoc committee on Moldova in the beginning of 2000 to address specific issues that can benefit from parliamentary attention. The committee is currently led by a colleague of mine, Ms. Arta Dade, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania. I welcome the activity of the committee in promoting greater co-operation between Chisinau and Tiraspol at the legislative level. We stand ready to support peace, stability and rule of law in Moldova.

Of course, OSCE as such, has also other important tracks when it comes to supporting the development in Moldova. I would like to thank the German OSCE Chairmanship for its active stance this year in reinvigorating the conflict settlement process and keeping Transdniestrian conflict settlement high on the OSCE agenda. This work, and the Berlin protocol in particular, paves the way for future actions. As mentioned in the resolution adopted by the OSCE PA in its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Session in July, the OSCE PA welcomes and supports the resumption of 5+2-talks.

Nevertheless, the current year has shown us in practice that there are no shortcuts to peace available. This is also valid in the case of Transdniestrian conflict. Instead, peace processes always require sustainable, long term and tireless work. As the status quo of a conflict cannot ever be good enough, it is important to continue the determined work towards the conflict settlement by being involved and bringing new ideas to the table.

I remain confident that the international community can positively support and further the Transdniestrian conflict settlement process also in the future. I would like to see Moldova as a case example where we could see concrete results coming from the further strengthened cooperation between OSCE PA and governmental side of the organization, as well as with other relevant stakeholders. Together with national authorities, assuming there is an inclusive national ownership existing, we can achieve a lot.

In my view, mediation could be a fruitful tool to further our joint efforts in building confidence between sides on the ground and achieving concrete results that benefit the citizens on both banks of Nistru-river.

Lastly, I would once more like to thank for this opportunity to reflect my thoughts about mediation and to give the topic the attention it deserves. Thank you very much for your attention!