



Address by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Pia Kauma

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 23rd Winter Meeting

23 February 2024 | Vienna

Closing Joint Session

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Dear Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we gather here in Vienna, the very fabric of European security is being tested by Russia's aggression.

All our countries are taking the threat seriously.

Many of you have warned of it for years.

In Ukraine, years of subversive action has become a full-scale invasion.

Threats have become reality.

We are ten years since the illegal annexation of Crimea and two years into the largest European conflict since the Second World War.

This is a pivotal moment in history.

Our institutions are being tested.

We are responding, albeit not always decisively.

But, as we acknowledge our shortcomings, we must make sure that we can rely on the pillars of our international system in the long term.

Europe's security landscape has always been in movement.

Although some periods have been a source of optimism, we have always fallen short of fulfilling the vision of a peaceful area of co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Yet, there is this shared belief that by working together we can achieve comprehensive security.

Your high levels of engagement in all facets of our work prove it.

At the heart of the OSCE's mission lies the commitment to dialogue, co-operation, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

These principles have guided our actions for decades.

But our dedication to dialogue has never entailed compromising the core values upon which the OSCE was established.

These values are non-negotiable.

We therefore must take every measure to safeguard them across all dimensions of security.

This morning, we have the opportunity to debate a topic of great importance: "European Security Today and Tomorrow: Parliamentary Perspectives on the Future of the OSCE."

I hope that our discussion this morning will feed into a broader discussion about the future of the OSCE and our Parliamentary Assembly.

As we look to the future, we must acknowledge one factor which has precipitated the destruction of European security today: the erosion of trust.

In an era marked by open armed conflict, disinformation, and hybrid warfare, building trust and confidence among our countries seems like an impossible task.

Yet, it is precisely in times of uncertainty that we must redouble our efforts to foster dialogue through our shared commitment to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

The war in Ukraine will necessarily continue to dominate our political agenda.

The persistent tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the continued occupation of regions of Georgia by the Russian Federation underscore the need for concerted international attention to transform the South Caucasus in an area of peace and prosperity.

High-level engagement is also needed to advance the Transdniestrian settlement process.

Throughout the OSCE area, and particularly in the Western Balkans and Central Asia, dialogue must prevent escalation.

Our security landscape is also being reshaped by emerging challenges, including cyber threats and disinformation.

These defy the traditional notions of security and require a comprehensive, multi-dimensional response.

As parliamentarians, we must work together to strengthen our collective resilience by enhancing our cybersecurity capabilities and proactively countering propaganda.

In charting the future of the OSCE, we must also reaffirm our commitment to the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

These principles are the bedrock of our shared values and aspirations.

As parliamentarians, we have a duty to uphold these principles in our own countries and advocate for their promotion throughout the OSCE region.

The death of Aleksey Navalny is a cruel reminder of the sacrifices made by those opposing totalitarianism.

All our countries face different challenges.

We have different cultures, different histories, and different perceptions of threats.

As Members of this Assembly, we must use such opportunities to bridge our points of view and find common ground.

Our debates must serve to share experiences and forge alliances.

As Navalny reminded us shortly before his return to Russia: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing."

So let us therefore take action with renewed determination.

Thank you.