



REPORT OF OSCE PA PRESIDENT  
PERE JOAN PONS SAMPIETRO  
WINTER MEETING



20 February  
2026

As we convene for the Winter Meeting in Vienna, the Assembly comes together at a decisive moment for the future of security, democracy and multilateralism across the OSCE region and beyond. What is at stake today is not only the security architecture of our continent, but the credibility of the democratic model itself. And that future is being tested – decisively – in Ukraine.

From the very first day of Russia's full-scale invasion, parliamentarians across this Assembly have stood with Ukraine. We have voted, travelled, observed, advocated, sanctioned, supported and spoken out. We have mobilized political backing, humanitarian assistance and institutional engagement. This unity has mattered. It has sent a clear message: Ukraine is not alone, and the defense of its sovereignty is inseparable from the defense of Europe's democratic future.

As the fourth year of Russia's full-scale invasion comes to an end and the fifth begins, the war continues to claim lives daily, with no ceasefire in sight and devastating humanitarian consequences. Ukraine remains the central political and security challenge facing Europe today. Our position must therefore be unequivocal: we work for a European Ukraine, living in permanent security, exercising full sovereignty over its territory, and free to decide its own future. There can be no sustainable peace in Europe without Ukraine, and no political settlement will be legitimate unless it restores Ukraine's sovereignty, security and democratic choice.



*OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons Sampietro and Speaker of Ukrainian Parliament Ruslan Stefanchuk, 10 February 2026*



What is being decided in Ukraine goes beyond borders. It concerns whether force can redraw maps, whether authoritarianism can prevail over democratic choice, and whether international law remains binding. If Ukraine prevails as a sovereign European democracy, the democratic model is strengthened. If aggression is rewarded, the consequences will reach far beyond this war.

Democratic legitimacy will remain central as Ukraine looks ahead, including in discussions about future elections or referenda. These decisions belong exclusively to the Ukrainian people. No aggressor can dictate the timing, the conditions or the outcome of Ukrainian democracy. Elections held in freedom and security will reinforce Ukraine's European path and demonstrate that even in the face of war, democratic institutions endure. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is not a spectator in this moment. We are a political actor with the capacity to act – and we are using that capacity. Through the Parliamentary Support Team for Ukraine and the work of our Special Envoy on the return of abducted Ukrainian children, we affirm that justice, accountability and human dignity must be central to any political solution. We will continue to be fully engaged. When Ukraine decides to hold elections, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly stands ready to support that process.

At the same time, Europe must assume greater responsibility for its own security and strategic stability. The security guarantees and partnerships that have underpinned peace for decades remain vital, but Europe must be prepared to act with greater coherence, capacity and political will. Strategic autonomy does not mean isolation; it means responsibility. It means ensuring that our security order cannot be destabilized by coercion or uncertainty.

This is particularly relevant when we hear statements openly questioning Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland, including suggestions that territory could be "purchased." This is not rhetorical excess; it is a direct challenge to the Helsinki Final Act and to the most basic norms of international law.

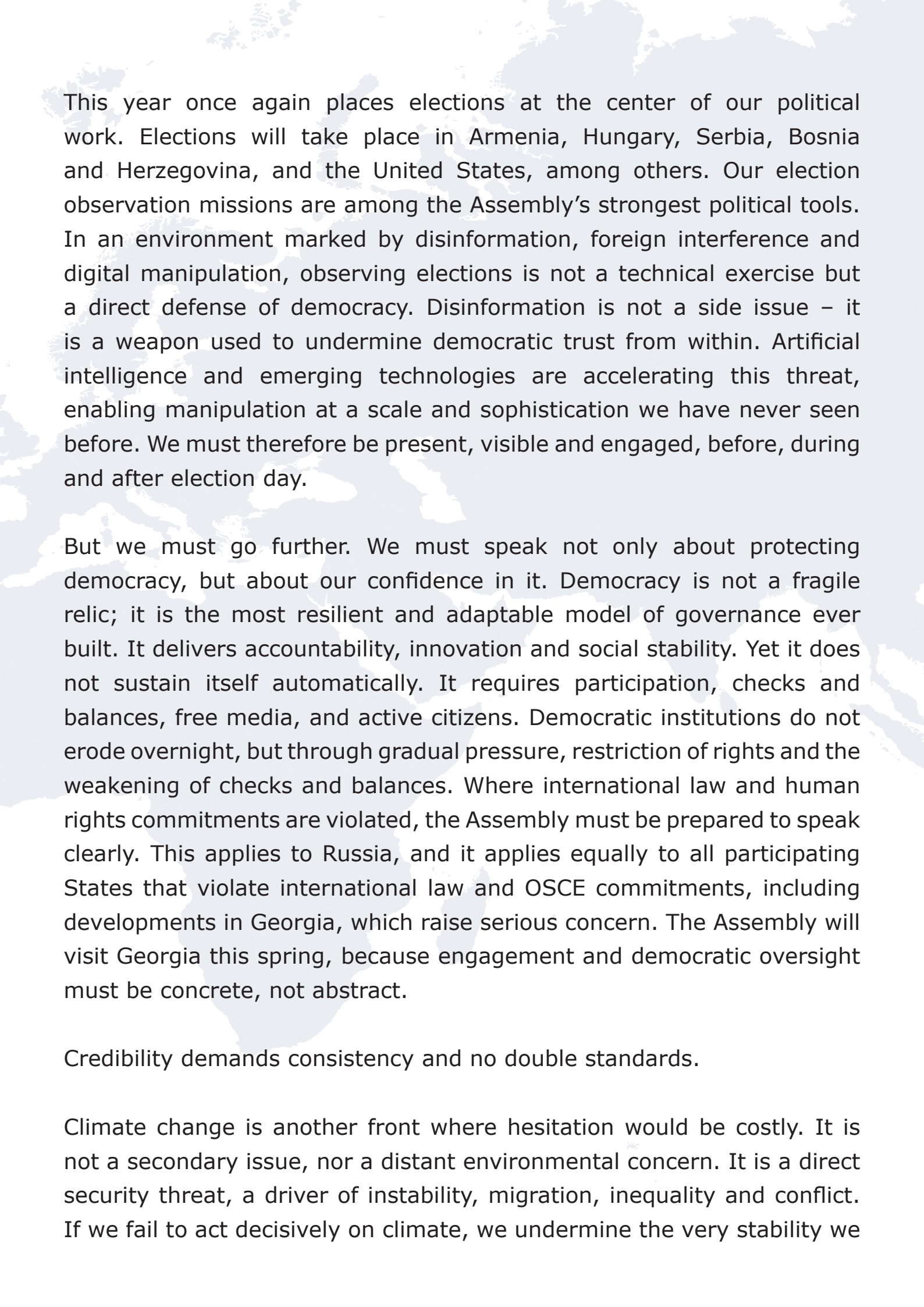
There is nothing ambiguous here. Sovereignty is not negotiable. Borders are not for sale. The European and transatlantic response must be clear, firm and united.

We are not speaking from a distance. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will visit Greenland this spring to reaffirm our commitment to sovereignty, dialogue and international law on the ground.

We must also speak clearly about the situation in Gaza. The humanitarian catastrophe unfolding before our eyes demands political clarity and moral responsibility. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed, the vast majority of the population has been displaced, and access to food, water and medical assistance remains gravely insufficient. The OSCE PA must continue to call unequivocally for the protection of civilians, full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, the immediate facilitation of humanitarian access, and a political horizon based on a just and lasting peace. Silence or ambiguity in the face of such suffering is not an option.



*OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons Sampietro and Speaker of Danish Parliament Søren Gade, 20 January 2026*



This year once again places elections at the center of our political work. Elections will take place in Armenia, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the United States, among others. Our election observation missions are among the Assembly's strongest political tools. In an environment marked by disinformation, foreign interference and digital manipulation, observing elections is not a technical exercise but a direct defense of democracy. Disinformation is not a side issue – it is a weapon used to undermine democratic trust from within. Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are accelerating this threat, enabling manipulation at a scale and sophistication we have never seen before. We must therefore be present, visible and engaged, before, during and after election day.

But we must go further. We must speak not only about protecting democracy, but about our confidence in it. Democracy is not a fragile relic; it is the most resilient and adaptable model of governance ever built. It delivers accountability, innovation and social stability. Yet it does not sustain itself automatically. It requires participation, checks and balances, free media, and active citizens. Democratic institutions do not erode overnight, but through gradual pressure, restriction of rights and the weakening of checks and balances. Where international law and human rights commitments are violated, the Assembly must be prepared to speak clearly. This applies to Russia, and it applies equally to all participating States that violate international law and OSCE commitments, including developments in Georgia, which raise serious concern. The Assembly will visit Georgia this spring, because engagement and democratic oversight must be concrete, not abstract.

Credibility demands consistency and no double standards.

Climate change is another front where hesitation would be costly. It is not a secondary issue, nor a distant environmental concern. It is a direct security threat, a driver of instability, migration, inequality and conflict. If we fail to act decisively on climate, we undermine the very stability we

claim to protect. The Assembly must therefore move beyond declarations and press for concrete commitments and measurable action, linking climate responsibility directly to security, economic resilience and post-conflict reconstruction. Addressing climate change is not optional; it is an integral part of comprehensive security and post-conflict recovery.



*23rd Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA, Istanbul, Türkiye, 17-19 November 2025*

Gender equality must be equally non-negotiable. At a time when some seek to downgrade or sideline this issue, we must be clear: the meaningful participation of women in political life, peace processes and decision-making is not an accessory to security — it is a condition for it. Inclusive societies are stronger, more resilient and more democratic. Retreating from gender commitments weakens our comprehensive security approach. The Assembly will continue to insist on the full implementation of commitments on gender equality and women, peace and security.

All of this takes place at a time when the OSCE itself faces significant institutional challenges, including the absence of an approved budget and uncertainty regarding future leadership arrangements. These constraints must not become an excuse for inaction. On the contrary, they require us to reaffirm the OSCE PA's capacity to act politically, to set priorities, and to remain a relevant and influential voice within the international security architecture.

Colleagues,

The greatest risk we face today is not only aggression or instability. It is fatigue. It is the temptation of indifference. It is the slow normalization of what should never be normal.

We cannot afford that.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly should not be an observer while history unfolds. We are political actors. Our role is to defend principles, to influence debates, and to drive outcomes.

The work before us is demanding, but the choice is clear. We either act collectively to defend democracy, sovereignty and human rights, or we allow them to be eroded. The future of European security, democratic institutions and the rules-based international order depends on our willingness to lead.

President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
Pere Joan Pons Sampietro  
Vienna, 20 February 2026

