



## **OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons Sampietro**

### Address to the 25th Winter Meeting Joint Session of the Three General Committees

19 February 2026 | Vienna

*Check against delivery.*

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

“Unity is what protects us.”

President Zelensky reminded us of this in Munich last week.

And I would add: Zelensky, today,

Defends Europe,

Defends us,

Defends democracy worldwide.

As we enter the fifth year of Russia’s aggression, unity is not a slogan.

It is a duty.

For four years, this Assembly has stood united.

Under the presidencies of Margareta Cederfelt, Pia Kauma, and myself, this Assembly has spoken with one voice, although we are from different political families and countries.

As Zelensky underscored last Saturday: now this voice must be stronger, because the pressure must increase to end this war.

Ukraine is not only fighting a war.

It is defending the principle that borders cannot be changed by force, against all principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

And let us be clear: if that principle falls in Ukraine, it falls everywhere.

Francis Fukuyama a écrit que le XXe siècle nous a donné des raisons d’être durablement pessimistes quant à l’avenir de l’humanité...

Moi, je ne suis pas d’accord.

Je suis convaincu qu'en tant que parlementaires représentant plus d'un milliard de citoyens, nous constituons l'un des réseaux politiques les plus puissants pour soutenir l'Ukraine, soutenir son peuple, contribuer à la réalisation de la paix et aider à la reconstruction politique et démocratique.

Après quatre ans,

Il n'y a pas de fatalité du déclin.

Il n'y a pas de « nouvelle normalité » dans l'agression.

Et il n'y aura pas de capitulation. Ni en Ukraine ni en Europe.

The Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Ruslan Stefanchuk, is with us today. He has said it clearly: this war is a struggle between authoritarianism and democracy.

It is not only a military test.

It is also an existential test of whether law or force will shape our future.

If aggression succeeds in Ukraine, it will not stop there. It will be repeated.

If authoritarianism prevails, democracy everywhere becomes more fragile.

Dear colleagues,

Ukraine today is more European than ever.

President Zelensky and the Ukrainian people are defending not only their sovereignty — they are defending European principles and values, democracy above all, for all of us.

Sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable.

But firmness is not about punishment.

It is about peace.

A just peace.

A lasting peace.

A peace grounded in the Helsinki principles — and backed by real security guarantees and the right of the Ukrainian people to decide their future.

Mr. Putin:

Stop the violence immediately — in the coldest winter of the last 25 years.

Withdraw your forces — completely and without conditions — from occupied Ukrainian territory.

Respect Ukraine's sovereign choice.

Release the three unlawfully detained OSCE staff members. Vadym, Maksym, Dmytro. They are civil servants. They serve this Organization. They must be freed.

Chers collègues,

La sécurité européenne ne peut pas être reconstruite sur la base de la coercition, l'annexion déguisée ou l'intimidation.

Elle ne peut être fondée que sur des règles.

Et les règles s'appliquent à tous.

Si nous défendons la souveraineté en Ukraine, nous devons la défendre partout — y compris au Groenland.

L'intégrité territoriale n'est pas soumise aux sondages d'opinion ni aux tentations géopolitiques. Et cela étant dit, comme l'a déclaré le sénateur américain Coons à Munich samedi dernier, seuls 17 % des Américains soutiennent l'annexion.

Et les Groenlandais souhaitent préserver leur identité telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui.

Si nous défendons le droit international humanitaire en Ukraine et au Groenland, nous devons le défendre à Gaza et en Cisjordanie.

J'ai toujours condamné les attaques du 7 octobre, comme je condamnerai toujours la mort de milliers de civils palestiniens.

Consistency is not optional. It is credibility.

Double standards are the worst choice we can make in challenging times.

The challenge before us goes beyond war.

It is about trust.

Across democratic societies, trust in institutions is eroding because people feel that delivery does not match promises.

When trust weakens, democracy weakens.

In that vacuum, political forces emerge promising destruction instead of reform.

They offer bulldozers instead of dialogue.

But breaking institutions does not empower citizens. It empowers instability.

We stand for something else: a rules-based order that protects people — not only the powerful. History will judge whether we defended democracy — or merely talked about it.

This Assembly cannot be a spectator. We have the capacity to act, and we must use it to defend universal principles and values, to be close to the populations we represent, and to do so cost-effectively.

Today, our main goal is to preserve and promote democracy, fostering dialogue, and underscoring the need for international law and respect for the Helsinki principles.

L'osservazione elettorale non è simbolica. È strategica. Protegge la legittimità prima che le crisi abbiano inizio.

È una medicina democratica — e le democrazie che smettono di diagnosticare se stesse diventano fragili.

Il mio obiettivo è ampliare il nostro lavoro di osservazione.

Modernizzare le nostre missioni.

Ci confrontiamo con minacce ibride — compresa l'intelligenza artificiale quando viene utilizzata come strumento di manipolazione e controllo. Siamo onesti: senza regole chiare e supervisione democratica, l'intelligenza artificiale rischia di diventare uno strumento di potere autoritario.

Ma l'ambizione senza risorse è retorica. Se vogliamo avere un impatto, dobbiamo finanziarlo. Per osservare più elezioni, abbiamo bisogno di maggiore sostegno da parte dei parlamenti e dei governi.

Perché investire nella resilienza democratica significa investire nella sicurezza.

We also engage where dialogue is fragile.

In Georgia, we are working to prevent political polarization from turning into permanent fracture. We go there not to endorse anyone - but to prevent vacuums where disinformation and escalation grow.

As you know, beginning of March a delegation will visit the country after months of contacts and dialogue with government and opposition.

In the South Caucasus, the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan is a great opportunity to bring prosperity and progress to a strategic region between Europe and Asia. We all have to push for accelerating peace and consolidate stability.

Dear colleagues,

If there is a structural threat to security in the short, medium and long term, it is climate change and the energy transition.

I am not certain whether we are still living in a new world order, or still struggling within the old one, as wars continue to unfold before our eyes. But one of the things I have no doubt is that we are facing a global emergency that could threaten humanity itself if we fail to confront it. Climate change is a threat multiplier. It fuels instability and displacement. And with no doubt without climate security there will be no global security.

For this presidency, gender equality is not a secondary issue. It is a priority. Societies that exclude women weaken themselves. And as president, I encourage you all to work to promote gender equality in our societies and also in our parliaments. Gender is also a fundamental pillar for real and full democracies.

La movilidad humana no es solo la cara amable del turismo, sino también una consecuencia de la inestabilidad global, las guerras, la pobreza, la erosión de la democracia y las dificultades económicas.

Seamos claros: hombres y mujeres como nosotros, con hijos, con bebés, con niños — deciden, en algún momento de sus vidas, buscar mejores oportunidades, esperanza, un trabajo y dignidad personal. Eso es lo que tendemos a olvidar en tiempos de criminalización del fenómeno migratorio.

Y seamos honestos: en un mundo inestable, que no se base en reglas ni en el derecho internacional, la migración aumentará en consecuencia.

La migración, en definitiva, debe gestionarse con responsabilidad y legalidad, no con brutalidad. Y desde sus raíces, porque nadie quiere abandonar su hogar; se ven obligados a hacerlo por falta de oportunidades.

El movimiento no es la amenaza. El conflicto, la represión y la crisis climática son las verdaderas amenazas.

Y permítanme terminar siendo muy claro: los muros y las fuerzas de seguridad fronteriza pueden crear la ilusión de control.

Pero eso es simplemente una falsa realidad.

Lo que generan es miedo e indignidad para nuestras democracias.

Colegas,

Representamos a ciudadanos, no a gobiernos.

Y los ciudadanos esperan valentía. Valentía para defender principios. Valentía para rechazar los dobles estándares. Valentía para decir que la democracia merece ser protegida — especialmente cuando resulta difícil.

Que la historia deje constancia de que, en un momento de prueba, esta Asamblea no dudó, sino que se mantuvo firme.

Muchas gracias.