



## **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President**

**Pere Joan Pons (MP, Spain)**

**23rd Autumn Meeting**

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*Check against delivery.*

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Secretary General,

Distinguished delegates, colleagues, and guests,

We are gathered in a city that bridges two worlds — at a time marked by tension, by war, but also by hope.

Here in Istanbul, one might be tempted to fall into that Istanbulu hüzün — a melancholy for the lost promise of the early 21st century, when we believed that the next decades would bring more democracy, more prosperity, and a stronger, more multilateral global order.

We were mistaken in that diagnosis.

Europe once again looks into the abyss of war — we see it in Ukraine, and tragically, not far from here, in Gaza. But this is not a time for melancholy or resignation. It is a time for courage, for responsible leadership, and for renewed faith in dialogue.

That is why, over these two days, I hope we can discuss how we, as parliamentarians, can contribute meaningfully to the resolution of these conflicts.

Colleagues,

Following my visit to Ukraine in October, I reaffirm today that our commitment to peace and security in Europe is stronger than ever — and of course, that begins with our unwavering support for Ukraine.

In line with that commitment, I am proud to announce that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will formally join the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children — another step in our steadfast support.

Any negotiation must include Ukraine at the table, and its future must be one peace and freedom, preserving its territorial integrity, and moving toward a future of rapid reconstruction and fair reparation.

Our Assembly has been consistent in its resolutions on Ukraine, and equally so in its calls for an end to the massacres in Gaza, as expressed in our Porto Resolution, for a path toward peace based on the recognition of two states.

I wish to commend the delegations of Armenia and Azerbaijan for their recent steps toward peace, dialogue and reconciliation — developments that give us hope for the future of their peoples.

We also continue our engagement in Georgia, working with all political forces to help strengthen democracy and dialogue — because even in times of polarization, we must keep the channels of understanding open.

Finally, I hope we can deepen parliamentary cooperation with all Central Asian countries.

Dear parliamentarians,

We know that we can be a strong voice for parliamentary diplomacy. That is why we must raise our voice in response to the climate emergency and the energy transition. This crisis demands action, as reflected in the report of our Special Representative on Climate presented for this Autumn Session — just as COP30 convenes in Brazil. And we must insist that this transition be just, reducing inequality rather than deepening it.

Since July, I have sought to ensure gender parity, and I am proud to say that 57% of my new appointments have been women.

Here in this Autumn Session, I call upon all parliamentarians to reaffirm their commitment to implement the Istanbul Convention, and to pursue policies promoting equality and the fight against violence against women and girls.

We must also remain a strong voice for memory, as we were recently when commemorating the 30th anniversary of the genocide at the Srebrenica Memorial.

Looking ahead to 2026, we must remain vigilant to the challenges facing democracy.

Following our last observation mission this year in Kyrgyzstan, our priorities include the Balkans — with key elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina — as well as the United States, where electoral trends often anticipate global shifts.

We all benefit from election observation, but our budget limits us to hard choices. If we want to cover more elections, we need more funding.

Observation makes our democracies stronger.

I therefore encourage all parliamentarians to reflect on how an increase in resources could strengthen our electoral observation work.

Let me conclude with one thought:

We have chosen multilateral dialogue as the theme of this Autumn Session — at a time when dialogue is not fashionable. And precisely for that reason, it is more necessary than ever to defend it — here, through parliamentary diplomacy and through politics itself.

Because politics and dialogue remain the most powerful tools we have to resolve conflicts.

Let us be courageous enough to engage in dialogue even with those who stand at our most distant opposites — and to keep the doors open.

This is about the future of our sons and daughters — and indeed, the future of democracy and of Europe.

Thank you very much.