



**REPORT OF SECRETARY GENERAL
ROBERTO MONTELLA
TO THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE**

2 July 2022

The 2022 Annual Session in Birmingham will mark the first Annual Session to be held fully in-person since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the introduction of new technologies enabled us to maintain political dialogue – by holding statutory meetings in remote (virtually) and hybrid format over the last 2 years - returning to gather in-person in Birmingham this year is crucial, as the Assembly's strength lies in the personal interactions and relationships amongst members fostering and strengthening interparliamentary dialogue, which cannot be substituted by online meetings.

This **report covers** nearly four months of activities (**February 2022 – July 2022**) and follows up to the one I presented during the Winter Meeting.¹ It goes without saying that the **Assembly's activities** reflected in this reporting period have been significantly impacted and consequently **focused on the war in Ukraine**, which is undoubtedly the most severe security challenge the OSCE has faced in the entirety of the organization's history. In view of the unprecedented crisis we are witnessing, it is particularly important that the Assembly will be able to come together in person in Birmingham this year to discuss the multitude of challenges and potential repercussions of the war, which rightly remain the priority of the Assembly's agenda.

Ever since the outbreak of Russia's war in Ukraine I have been grappling with the question: ***What more we can do as the Parliamentary Assembly in these times of uncertainty?*** It is in this spirit that the International Secretariat has intensified consultations with Members of the PA, as well as our cooperation with the OSCE Permanent Council, the OSCE Secretariat, the OSCE Institutions and parliamentary international partners. The valuable guidance and contributions of the PA leadership and its members have enabled us to carefully calibrate our common response to the unprecedented challenges and organize a wide range of activities addressing the crisis unfolding in and around Ukraine, which I will outline below. Simultaneously, we have maintained our strong support for the work of our organization throughout the entire OSCE region.

I. OSCE PA Action on Ukraine

In response to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the Assembly has been clear and consistent in its messages of condemnation of Russia's actions in firm defense of the core values underpinning the OSCE, while reiterating the role of the OSCE PA in creating and preserving conditions for dialogue and confidence building, even in the most challenging of times.

An **extraordinary meeting of its Standing Committee was convened in March**, which was addressed by the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the OSCE Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk and former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko informing the leadership on the situation on the ground in Ukraine. The extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee primarily focused on how the Parliamentary Assembly can most effectively respond to the crisis.

¹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/winter-meetings/2022-vienna/reports-25/4325-secretary-general-montella-s-report-to-the-standing-committee-2/file

In view of the humanitarian impact of the war in Ukraine, the International Secretariat supported **a visit of leaders of the Assembly to Polish reception centres for Ukrainian refugees at the Polish-Ukrainian border in March**, during which members were briefed on how to support those displaced and prevent risks of trafficking.

During the **high-level visit** we organized **to the United States in March**, OSCE PA leaders and I met with UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo discussing co-operation between the OSCE and the United Nations, including complementing common efforts in responding to crises, specifically as it relates to the war in Ukraine.

As it concerns **co-operation with the United Nations**, the **International Secretariat facilitated two visits of the UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine Mr. Amin Awad to Vienna**, in line with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 1 March that includes calls for the OSCE to help de-escalate the situation and support the functions of the United Nations' Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine. Both visits have enabled meaningful exchanges between Mr. Awad, the International Secretariat, representatives of participating States as well as representatives of the OSCE Secretariat and the other Institutions. In an exchange of letters with the UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine, I have agreed to continue to support his mandate within the boundaries of existing resources.

Within the framework of the Call for Action – Helsinki +50 initiative, we ran **3 web dialogues on role of the OSCE in addressing the conflict in Ukraine** and its consequences, which allowed members to debate and exchange with representatives of the relevant OSCE institutions on how parliamentarians can support and complement various strands of OSCE activities regarding the war in Ukraine. In this respect, it is important to note that the International Secretariat continues to be in regular contact with all OSCE Executive Structures and Institutions concerning developments and coordination of activities concerning Ukraine.

The **Bureau Meeting held in the Danish Parliament in April** heard remarks from Ukrainian Ambassador to Denmark Mykhailo Vydoynyk and Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA Economic and Environmental Committee Artur Gerasymov, who reported on the situation in their country.

Given the recent appointment of the **Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine**, the International Secretariat has also been supporting the Special Representative's diplomatic efforts in fostering the parliamentary dialogue to accordance with his mandate – a first (online) meeting between the Ukrainian Delegation the OSCE PA and the Special Representative was organized in May. In addition, **a Special Rapporteur on War Crimes**, whose mandate covers advancing investigations in bodies related to the OSCE and other international organizations, was appointed in June. The Special Rapporteur's first activity will be the holding of a side event during the Birmingham Annual Session.

Most importantly, a delegation comprising leaders of the Assembly conducted **an official visit to Ukraine in June**. The delegation and I met **in Kyiv** with **Speaker of the Ukraine Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mykola Tochytskyi**; we also visited the surroundings of **Kyiv, Irpyn and Bucha**, which have been particularly affected by Russian military aggression. The

visit allowed the delegation to witness first-hand the humanitarian impact of the war and to directly hear from with Ukrainian authorities about its far-reaching implications. The show of solidarity and continued support from the OSCE PA for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, in line with the founding principles of the OSCE, was crucial in a time of gross violations of international law and continued threats to the rules-based international order.

II. Activities

The leadership of the Assembly has repeatedly stressed that the OSCE PA must exhaust all possibilities to lend its contribution to bring peace to Ukraine; nonetheless, it also underlined that in doing so **the Assembly cannot neglect other major issues and conflicts challenging security in the OSCE region**, which also require outmost attention.

In view of the above, the **International Secretariat engaged in wide array of projects beyond the war in Ukraine**, which are (as per usual practice) listed in the comprehensive overview of all activities in annex to my report. I wish however to briefly highlight the following activities:

Election Observation

In this reporting period, the International Secretariat deployed two election observation missions concurrently, as both Parliamentary elections in **Hungary** and Presidential and early parliamentary elections in **Serbia** were held on **3 April**. Together, 137 OSCE PA parliamentarians observed the elections in Hungary and Serbia – the high level of participation equaled pre-pandemic participation in election observation missions.

As it regards upcoming elections, the International Secretariat is preparing to deploy an election observation mission to **Bosnia and Herzegovina** for the General elections to be held on **2 October**, and to the **United States** for the Midterm elections to be held on **8 November**.

Ad Hoc Committees

The Ad Hoc Committee on Migration conducted a **three-day visit to Lesbos, Samos and Athens** in March. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to assess migration and asylum policies, and to bring renewed attention to the situation on the Aegean islands.

In addressing the refugee crisis as a direct consequence of the war in Ukraine, the Secretariat also conducted a survey on measures adopted by OSCE participating States to welcome refugees from Ukraine, an initiative proposed by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, with the aim to contribute to the sharing of ‘good practices’.

As for the **Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism**, a delegation of members of the **committee participated in the UNOCT High-Level Conference on Parliamentary Support to Victims of Terrorism held in Rome** in June lending their contribution to the global efforts in counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism. During their visit to Italy, the delegation also met with relevant Italian authorities to learn about the Italian counter-terrorism strategy and legislation, including measures adopted to prevent radicalization.

Special Representatives

Our 16 Special Representatives have been particularly engaged on behalf of the Assembly in this reporting period. A number of visits in support of the Special Representatives and their respective regional portfolios encompassing **Central Asia, South East Europe and the South Caucasus** were organized by the International Secretariat.

Moreover, upon initiative of the Special Representative on Fighting Corruption, the International Secretariat supported the Parliament of Cyprus in hosting an **international conference** on “*Combating Corruption, Defending Democracy: the Role of National Parliaments*”, which was held in Nicosia in May. The conference, which served as a platform to share experiences and best practices of national parliaments in combating corruption and enhancing transparency, was the most attended non-statutory meeting of the Assembly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 60 parliamentarians from 30 countries present.

Web Dialogues

Whilst we have significantly reduced the number of Web Dialogues as we continue to progressively return to in person-activities, Web Dialogues remain an effective tool in advancing the work of the OSCE PA when utilized in a targeted manner.

The increased flexibility of online meetings has allowed us to host two joint Webinars with our OSCE partner institutions, namely the Web Dialogue on “*Realizing Gender Equality in Parliament: Transforming Institutions, Delivering for all Women and Men*”, which was jointly hosted with our partners from the ODIHR in March, as well as the Webinar on the “*Safety of Female Journalists Online: the Role of Parliamentary Action*“, which we co-organized with the office of the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media in April.

We also held a Web Dialogue on the “*Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the OSCE Region: a Parliamentary Perspective*” in March.

III. Administration

Budget

I would like to express my gratitude to the Assembly for its continued support in providing the necessary resources to the International Secretariat to meet its commitments to implement the activities our parliamentarians wish to carry out.

The proposed OSCE PA budget for 2022/2023 depicts a careful assessment reflecting the evolving needs of the Assembly. Against the backdrop of an increase of activities involving parliamentarians by more than 600% from 2016 up to today (see attached infographic) as well as the serious economic challenges we are facing in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis with increased inflation and great unpredictability, the 2022/2023 budget is commensurate to the minimum basic needs of the Assembly.

Staff

The International Secretariat has continued to operate as a single entity with Headquarters in Copenhagen and a Vienna Office doing its utmost to efficiently cover an increased number of the PA activities within its available resources. In the spirit of increasing the impact of the PA and its added value for the OSCE family our Vienna Office has furthered its coordination with the OSCE Secretariat and Institutions, including within the framework of regular political exchanges with the CiO and PA statements at the Permanent Council meetings mainly focused on briefing about PA activities and conveying the key political messages from our leadership.

As usual, I wish to express continued gratitude to **the Danish and Austrian authorities** for respectively hosting and co-hosting our premises as well as **Germany and Italy** for seconding staff and renew my call to participating States to consider secondments – an excellent way to optimize human resources and increase output.

Although the whole world is gradually lifting COVID-19 related restrictions there have been once again worrying reports about the rapidly rising number of infections in some countries. International Secretariat will continue to closely monitor the epidemiological situation; meanwhile, telecommuting will remain the general rule in the upcoming weeks, even if both offices in Copenhagen and Vienna are open and operative for voluntary in-person working.

I wish to whole-heartedly **thank all staff of the International Secretariat** for their commitment and hard work navigating through what is the most challenging time of our organization.

Lastly and most importantly, I would like to **express my deepest sympathy to all my colleagues** who have been **directly affected by the tragic circumstances in Ukraine**, who we will continue to support in every possible way we can.

Annex – OSCE PA Activities in the Reporting Period of February to June 2022

2022	
Event	Date
OSCE PA PA WINTER MEETING	24 - 25 February
SR Elderly Meeting with French Minister for Personal Independence	28 February
Post 2020 EOM Visit to the USA	1 - 12 March
Call for Action Meeting on SDGs	2 March
Signing of AS2022 Agreement and Visit to the UK	9 March
SG Call with NATO PA and PACE counterparts	9 March
SR on SEE Visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina	9 -10 March
Extraordinary Meeting of the Standing Committee	11 March
Visit of PA Informal Network of Young Parliamentarians to Vienna	11 March
SG Call with CIS counterpart	11 March
VP Participation to the Antalya Forum	11-13 March
High Level Visit to Poland-Ukraine Border	13-15 March
SG Visit to Vienna for Meeting with Governmental Interlocutors	15 March
Assessment Visit to Bulgaria for AM	14 - 16 March
Migration Committee Visit to Greece	20 - 23 March
Call for Action Meeting on OSCE and Ukraine Conflict	23 March
SG Meeting with UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine	24 March
High Level Visit to the United States	28- 31 March
President Address to IPA CIS 30th Anniversary	28- 29 March
Meeting of the Migration Committee	28 March
PA-ODIHR Webinar on Gender-Sensitive Parliaments	30 March
EOM to Hungary	3 April
EOM to Serbia	3 April
PA BUREAU MEETING	4 April
SR on Digital Agenda Meetings at Danish Parliament	6 April
Migration Comm. Meeting with Greek Minister for Migration and Asylum	6 April
Joint PA-RFOM Event	20 April
Visit of OSCE Head of Presence in Albania to the Secretariat	20 April
SR on Central Asia Visit to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan	20 - 26 April
SR on Mediterranean Affairs Meeting with Israeli Ambassador to OSCE	28 April
SG Participation in University Seminar Series by OSCE Italian Permanent Mission	03 May
SG Participation in Call with informal Silk Road Support Group	04 May
Visit of UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine to Vienna	6 - 9 May
SR on SEE Visit to North Macedonia	8 - 10 May
SR on Civil Society Participation UNOCT Conference on HR, Civil Society & Counter-Terrorism	9 May
SR on SEE Visit to Albania	10 - 11 May
Call for Action Meeting on OSCE and Ukraine Conflict	11 May
SR on SEE Visit to Montenegro	11 – 12 May
President Participation in Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting II	16 - 17 May
Informal (online) Bureau Meeting	18 May

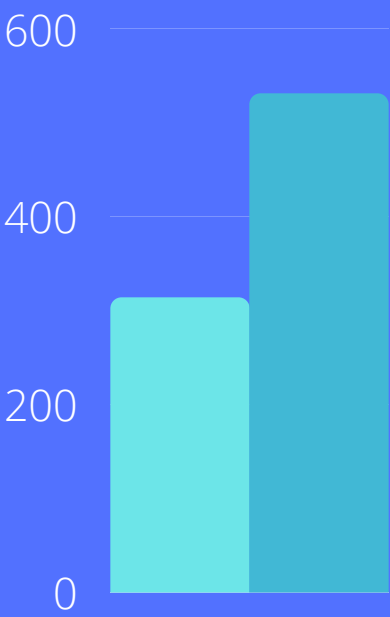
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SR on Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine Meeting with Russian Amb. to Austria and Russian Permanent Rep. to OSCE	19 May
SR on Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine Meeting with Polish Permanent Rep. to OSCE	20 May
SR for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine Call with Ukrainian Delegation to OSCE PA	23 May
ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission to the United States	23 May
SR on South Caucasus to Georgia	24 - 25 May
SR on Digital Media Visit to Cyprus	26 May
Cypriot Parliament & OSCE PA Anti-Corruption Conference	27- 28 May
Participation in NATO PA Session	27-30 May
2nd Committee Chair Visit to Athens	30 May
ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission to Bosnia & Herzegovina	31 May
SR on SEE Visit to Romania	6 - 8 June
SR on SEE Visit to Bulgaria	8 - 9 June
CCT Participation in UNOCT Conference on Victims of Terrorism	7-8 June
CCT Member Participation in Security Briefing for Legislative Authorities by OSCE Mission to B&H	8 June
CCT Chair Participation at UNOCT Meeting: Parliamentary Assemblies on Counter-Terrorism Matters	10 June
Visit of President and SR on South Caucasus to Armenia	15 - 16 June
Women, Peace & Security Conference in Georgia	17 June
Call for Action Follow Up Meeting on OSCE and Ukraine Conflict	22 June
High Level Visit to Ukraine	27 June



Assembly's Activities

Number of Activities 2010–2015 vs 2016–*2022

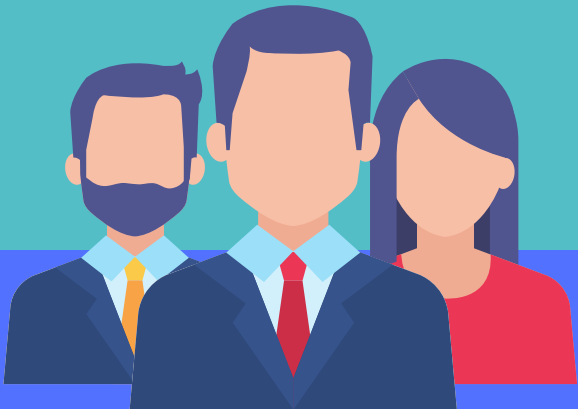


Total number of Activities
2010– 2015: 314

Total number of Activities
2016–*2022: 531

INCREASE BY

69 %

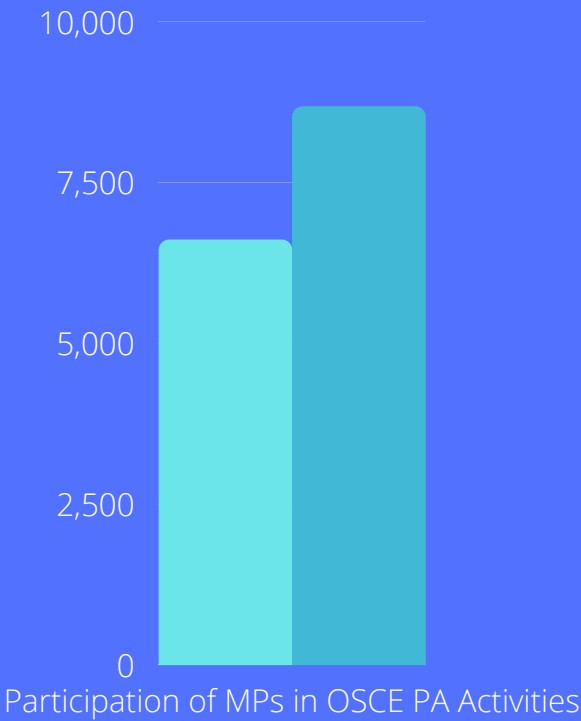


Total number of MPs
participated in OSCE
PA Activities
2010 – 2015: 6608

Total number of MPs
participated in OSCE
PA Activities
2016 – *2022: 8676

INCREASE BY

31 %



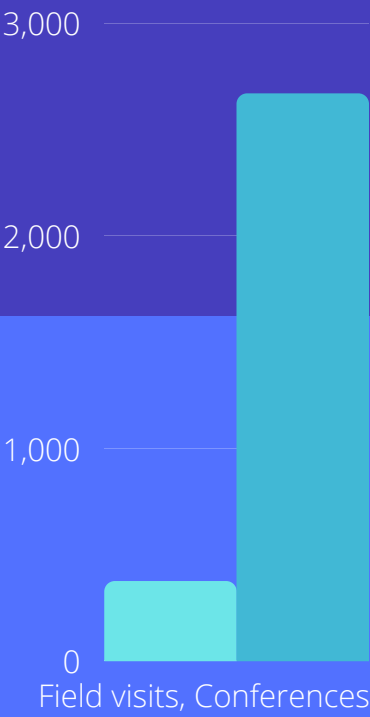
2010–2015

2016–*2022



INCREASE BY

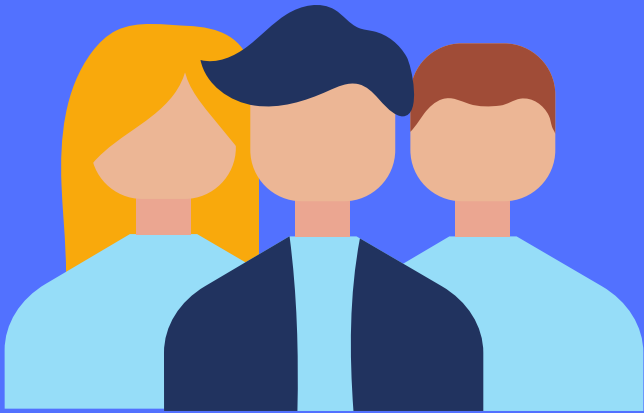
608 %



Total number of MPs
participated in OSCE
PA field visits,
conferences etc.
2010– 2015: 377

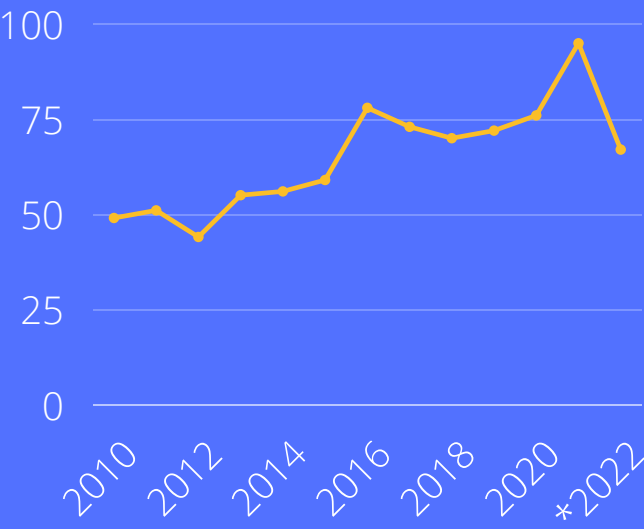
Total number of MPs
participated in OSCE
PA field visits,
conferences etc.
2016–*2022: 2669

Assembly's Activities



Everything You Want to Know

Number of Activities per year 2011 – *2022

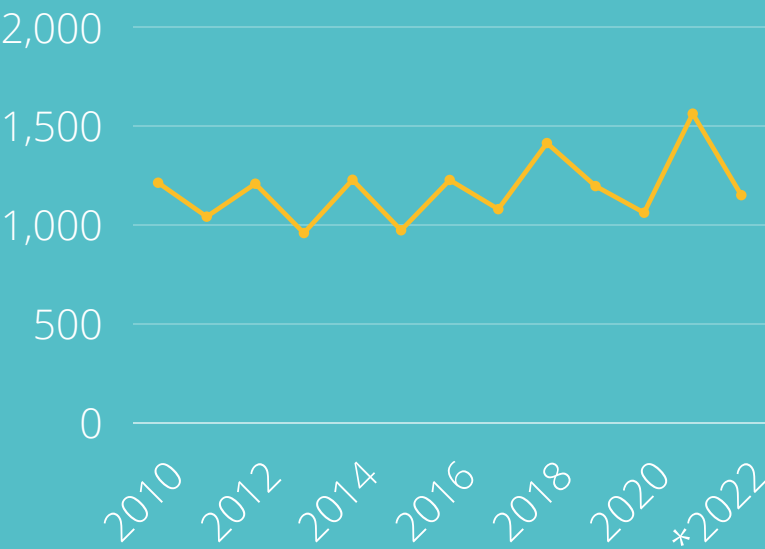


Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the Assembly has not only not limited but embraced the opportunities offered by new remote working formats and video conferencing tools, thereby increasing the number of activities.

"Flexibility and adaption are some of the OSCE PA's greatest assets. I am proud that the Assembly is fully operative in all its key mandated activities, carving its functionality to respond to challenges and remaining engaged and on target on the most pressing issues of the international security agenda."

Report of OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella, 3 November 2021

Total participation of MPs in OSCE PA Activities 2011 – *2022



GRAND TOTAL

15527

Total participation of MPs in OSCE PA Activities 2019 – *2022

TOTAL PARTICIPATION IN 2019

TOTAL PARTICIPATION IN 2020

TOTAL PARTICIPATION IN 2021

TOTAL PARTICIPATION IN *2022

