

To: Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States

CC: Heads of National Delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Permanent Representatives to the OSCE

24 July 2020

Dear Minister,

The OSCE is undergoing a deep crisis, and it is now constrained in its operations by the absence of the heads of all four Executive Structures that make up the Organization. As the elected leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and as parliamentarians who know and care deeply about the OSCE, we hereby call for your dedicated attention to this serious situation.

The inability to reach agreement earlier this month on the extension of the OSCE Secretary General, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the subsequent failure to find an interim solution with the incumbents leave a vacuum that damages our collective security. We had come to know and respect the dedicated professionals in these positions, and while their forced departures are regrettable, the process for finding their successors must now move forward without delay. We firmly believe that this is a time requiring more multilateral leadership, not empty chairs. You and your fellow Members of the OSCE Ministerial Council are in a position to rectify this problem, and we urge you to take immediate steps to this end.

The situation that has led the Organization to this unfortunate juncture represents an even more serious challenge than unfulfilled leadership positions. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has long advocated for greater dialogue at the political level on OSCE matters, and this remains more important now than ever. As parliamentarians, we remain committed to contributing an important political perspective to the work of the OSCE, but it is the Governments of OSCE participating States that must address the institutional crisis in the organization.

In the light of this unfortunate situation, the elected leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its Secretariat are now launching a series of initiatives to address this crisis and intend to present to the Ministerial Council in Tirana in December a set of proposals on key issues that will need to be addressed in the context of an inclusive and open

dialogue needed to revitalise and relaunch the OSCE, so that it can continue the important work it does for the benefit of all OSCE participating States and their citizens.

We need to act together to revive the OSCE and its work on preventing conflicts and addressing key current security challenges, promoting cooperation in the economic and environmental field, strengthening democratic practices and the rule of law.

In the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly we have long prided ourselves on bringing democratic legitimacy to the OSCE as a whole. To this end, our dialogue on key topics has continued unhindered throughout the recent COVID-19 crisis, with important results ([enclosed](#)). The executive structures of the Organization similarly effectively adjusted their operations in light of the challenges created by the ongoing pandemic, but the dismissal of the only elected officials at the helm of these institutions puts into serious question the ability of the Organization to continue operating as we would expect, in a complex environment where strong leadership is greatly needed. The current situation is not sustainable for the Organization, and we hope for your personal contribution to overcoming this crisis.

Rest assured, Excellency, that you can rely on the strong support of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in any significant efforts to restoring the ability of the OSCE to serve as a key platform for common engagement in overcoming our differences and advancing co-operative security, based solidly on a renewed commitment of the participating States to respect the 10 principles of the Helsinki Final Act, at this critical juncture.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the OSCE PA Bureau:

- Mr. George Tsereteli, Georgia, President
- Peter Lord Bowness, United Kingdom, Vice-President
- Mr. Azay Guliyev, Azerbaijan, Vice-President
- Mr. Victor Paul Dobre, Romania, Vice-President
- Mr. Roger Wicker, U.S.A., Vice-President
- Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, Sweden, Vice-President
- Ms. Kari Henriksen, Norway, Vice-President and Rapporteur of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions
- Mr. Kristian Vigenin, Bulgaria, Vice-President
- Mr. Pascal Allizard, France, Vice-President
- Mr. Peter Juel-Jensen, Denmark, Treasurer
- Mr. Ilkka Kanerva, Finland, President Emeritus
- Mr. Richard Hudson, U.S.A., Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security
- Mr. Costel Neculai Dunava, Romania, Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security
- Mr. Laurynas Kasciunas, Lithuania, Rapporteur of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security
- Ms. Doris Barnett, Germany, Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment

- Mr. Artur Gerasymov, Ukraine, Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment
- Ms. Elona Gjebrea Hoxha, Albania, Rapporteur of the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment
- Mr. Kyriakos Hadjiyianni, Cyprus, Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions
- Mr. Michael Georg Link, Germany, Vice-Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

- Roberto Montella, Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly