

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**Mr. George Tsereteli**

**Winter Meeting  
of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

**VIENNA, 20-21 February 2020**

Dear colleagues and friends,

Following my re-election as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during our Luxembourg Annual Session, I have continued to be active on your behalf to promote our work with leaders from our national parliaments and partner institutions, affirm our role within the OSCE family, and highlight some key priorities, in particular conflict resolution.

I appreciate your strong support and the valuable assistance and advice provided by the Secretariat in both Copenhagen and Vienna. This has been crucial to provide parliamentary responses to a broad OSCE agenda and aim to meet our most pressing challenges.

Detailed information on my work as President is listed in this report. In addition to these primary activities, I have met on several occasions with Heads of OSCE institutions to improve co-ordination at headquarters and in the field and ensure that our activities complement each other. I have also met with numerous PA delegations on the margins of my travels to ensure that all voices are heard and reflected in the work of our Parliamentary Assembly. Finally, together with a small group of Members, the Bureau and the International Secretariat, we have continued to hold regular discussions to consider changes in the Assembly's work, in order to make it more effective and more visible.

I want to thank those parliaments that have hosted my visits, but also particularly applaud and thank OSCE staff. Since our last Annual Session, I have had the opportunity to visit seven OSCE field missions<sup>1</sup> and I have met with dedicated professionals from many other OSCE offices. I can personally attest to the excellent work they do, at times under difficult circumstances.



<sup>1</sup> The OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, the OSCE Presence in Albania, the OSCE Mission to Serbia, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, and the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

## July 2019

Immediately following our latest Annual Session, I travelled to the High Tatras Mountains of Slovakia to take part in the Informal Ministerial meeting convened by Slovak Foreign Minister and then-OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Miroslav Lajcak. I underlined that our Parliamentary Assembly, armed with our newly adopted Luxembourg Declaration, remains ready to provide key input to the work of the organization in all fields of security, leveraging the distinct contributions and added value of parliamentarians. I explained that our Declaration covers a wide range of topics reflecting issues of concerns for OSCE citizens, in particular the suffering of people in conflict zones. This gathering also provided a good opportunity for informal exchanges with a number of foreign ministers, including those from Sweden, Spain, Luxembourg, Kazakhstan, Albania, and Armenia.<sup>2</sup>

The following week, I was in Vienna, Austria to address the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting. There, I stressed that a broad outlook to multilateral diplomacy, involving parliamentarians, civil society, academia and others, is needed in order to ensure a strong and principled approach to human rights. I am firmly convinced that many different actors, beyond state governments, have a legitimate voice. We must therefore listen to them if we want to find lasting solutions to the challenges facing us. This inclusive approach also adds strength and legitimacy to international relations that can otherwise appear distant from the real needs of the people we serve.<sup>3</sup>

## August 2019

Over the summer, we coordinated a plan of activities together with the International Secretariat. I also proceeded with several appointments to better place our Assembly on some key issues identified during our Luxembourg Annual Session. I therefore appointed Irene Charalambides (Cyprus) as Special



<sup>2</sup> Prompt and effective action needed to help people suffering from conflicts and human rights violations, says Tsereteli in Slovakia, 9 July 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/prompt-and-effective-action-needed-to-help-people-suffering-from-conflicts-and-human-rights-violations-says-osce-pa-president-tsereteli-in-slovakia>.

<sup>3</sup> Inclusive multilateralism needed to meet challenges and strengthen human rights, PA President Tsereteli says in Vienna, 16 July 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/inclusive-multilateralism-needed-to-meet-challenges-and-strengthen-human-rights-pa-president-tsereteli-says-in-vienna-2>

Representative on Fighting Corruption and Pia Kauma (Finland) as Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement. I also tasked Stefana Miladinovic (Serbia) as Special Rapporteur on the Digital Agenda and Luca Santolini (San Marino) as Special Rapporteur on Disinformation and Propaganda.<sup>4</sup> Following the departure of Makis Voridis (Greece) from the Assembly, I also appointed Abid Raja (Norway) and Lisa Chambers (Ireland) as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism.<sup>5</sup>



We also continued to work diligently to modernize our working practices with a view of making the OSCE PA more visible and more effective. I visited the International Secretariat in early September to finalize our plans.



At the end of August, I attended the opening session of the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv, Ukraine to express solidarity with the Ukrainian people as the new parliament committed to ambitious reforms in the face of continuous challenges in the East. I was able to exchange with the new Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Dmytro Razumkov. I underlined the vital role of the OSCE in Ukraine and encouraged continued strong engagement by Ukrainian parliamentarians in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I also exchanged with other foreign dignitaries, including European Parliament Vice-President Klara Dobrev, on ways to boost co-operation with the PA.



As on previous occasions, my visit to Kyiv allowed me to hold fruitful talks with the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, Ambassador Yaşar Halit Çevik, and thank the SMM for the support provided on parliamentary visits to eastern Ukraine, their tireless efforts to support people's humanitarian and human rights' needs, reduce tensions, and foster peace and security throughout Ukraine. I also met with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador Henrik Villadsen, to exchange on ongoing PCU initiatives to reform the judiciary, foster dialogue, protect human rights and safeguard the environment.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Mr. Santolini's parliamentary mandate ended following the 2019 Sammarinese general election.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Raja has since been appointed Minister of Culture. Ms. Chambers' parliamentary mandate ended following the 2020 Irish general election.

<sup>6</sup> *In visit to Kyiv, President Tsereteli expresses solidarity with people of Ukraine, urges continued efforts to strengthen democratic institutions*, 30 August 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press->

## September 2019

Early in September, I was in Copenhagen, Denmark for a series of meetings at the International Secretariat, the Danish Parliament, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I thanked the Danish parliament and the Danish Delegation for its continued support to the Assembly, noting that as the host of the International Secretariat, Denmark is the single biggest contributor to the OSCE PA's budget. I also welcomed Head of Delegation Peter Juel Jensen's new role as Assembly Treasurer. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we also had interesting conversations on the role of parliamentarians in mitigating the effects of climate change, ongoing conflicts in the OSCE area, including in Ukraine, OSCE PA work in the human dimension, and the situation in Georgia.<sup>7</sup>

I then travelled to Andermatt, Switzerland to participate in the third international parliamentary conference of the OSCE PA Silk Road Support Group. This event provided a useful follow-up on our Luxembourg discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and I stressed that, through our defense of freedom, democracy, strong principles, shared commitments and common goals, our Organization already makes strong contributions towards their fulfilment. I also emphasized that parliaments can further help advance sustainable development and security by adopting relevant legislation, providing oversight, ratifying treaties, approving budgets and setting agendas that prioritize the need to comply with international commitments. Furthermore, this conference was the occasion to strengthen interparliamentary oversight over the Belt and Road project, and I welcomed the opportunity to exchange with officials from the People's Republic of China on some of the concerns expressed by our Assembly.<sup>8</sup>



[2019/in-visit-to-kyiv-president-tsereteli-expresses-solidarity-with-people-of-ukraine-urges-continued-efforts-to-strengthen-democratic-institutions](https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/osce-pa-president-tsereteli-visits-danish-capital-for-meetings-at-secretariat-parliament-and-foreign-ministry)

<sup>7</sup> OSCE PA President Tsereteli visits Danish capital for meetings at Secretariat, Parliament and Foreign Ministry, 5 September 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/osce-pa-president-tsereteli-visits-danish-capital-for-meetings-at-secretariat-parliament-and-foreign-ministry>

<sup>8</sup> Sustainable development in focus at Switzerland conference, featuring high-level OSCE PA participation, 9 September 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/sustainable-development-in-focus-at-switzerland-conference-featuring-high-level-osce-pa-participation>

I addressed the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw in mid-September, where I deplored a downward trend in the struggle to respect and promote human rights and human security in the past decade. This requires increased dedication and focus by all, and I thank our Assembly's human rights committee Chair Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) and our new Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement Pia Kauma (Finland), who accompanied me and Secretary General Roberto Montella at this important gathering.<sup>9</sup> This edition of the HDIM also enabled us to engage further with civil society by holding a side-event on priority recommendations formulated by the PA in the human dimension.

Towards the end of the month, I returned to Central Asia by first participating in the Fourth Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Countries' Parliaments in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan together with Vice-President Pascal Allizard (France).

On the margins of the parliamentary conference, we held several bilateral meetings with Armenian Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, Azerbaijani Speaker Ogtay Asadov, Moldovan Speaker Zinaida Greceanii, North Macedonian Speaker Talat Xhaferi, Tajik Speaker Shukurjon Zuhurov, and Uzbek Speaker Nurdinjon Ismoilov. We also exchanged with the Speakers from Austria, Belarus, Cyprus, and Turkey.

We also met with Mazhilis Chairman Nurlan Nigmatulin and Senate Chairwoman Dariga Nazarbayeva, who serves as the Head of Kazakhstan's Delegation to the OSCE PA, as well as with Kazakhstan's First President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The conversations underlined Kazakhstan's long-standing commitment and contributions to international dialogue and to the effectiveness of the OSCE and its Institutions, including through good co-operation with the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan.

As the Special Co-ordinator and leader of short-term OSCE observers for the early presidential election of June 2019, I also took the time to meet with NGO representatives and opposition figures to discuss post-election developments,



<sup>9</sup> *Civil society engagement essential to advance human rights, says OSCE PA President at Warsaw meeting*, 16 September 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/civil-society-engagement-essential-to-advance-human-rights-says-osce-pa-president-at-warsaw-meeting>

including concerns related to limitations on freedom of expression, association, and assembly, as well as the state of co-operation between civil society and public authorities.<sup>10</sup>

I then took part in a seminar organized by the United Nations Development Programme in Kyrgyzstan, together with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the Bishkek-based Legal Clinic "Adilet," which aimed to take stock of the current status of parliamentary oversight functions in the Kyrgyz Republic and in other countries. In my keynote speech, I pointed out that political will remains a key requirement for the effective implementation of parliamentary oversight. This compels us, parliamentarians, to lead by example and adhere to the same strict standards which we demand of members of government.

In a meeting with the Speaker of the Jogorku Kenesh, Dastanbek Dzhumabekov, I recalled Kyrgyzstan's strong engagement within the OSCE PA, as demonstrated by its hosting of the 2018 Autumn Meeting in Bishkek. I also noted that the negative trend of deterioration of the media environment, which occurred in the run-up to the 2017 presidential election, seemed to have been reversed. I expressed the hope that Kyrgyz authorities will continue to promote respect for freedom of the media and expression, enable an engaged civil society, and promote fundamental rights and freedoms.

I also visited the OSCE Academy to meet its leadership and the new cohort of students, as well as the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, headed by Ambassador Pierre Von Arx, to discuss how the PA can further support the work of the OSCE in the country.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>10</sup> *Respect for rules-based order key to achieving peace across Eurasia, OSCE PA President underlines at Speakers' meeting*, 25 September 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/respect-for-rules-based-order-key-to-achieving-peace-across-eurasia-osce-pa-president-underlines-at-speakers-meeting>

<sup>11</sup> *Strong parliamentary oversight essential for democracy and good governance, says OSCE PA President Tsereteli in Bishkek*, 27 September 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/strong-parliamentary-oversight-essential-for-democracy-and-good-governance-says-osce-pa-president-tsereteli-in-bishkek>

## October 2019

Our 2019 Autumn Meeting in Marrakesh strongly reaffirmed our Mediterranean dimension. This first OSCE PA statutory meeting held outside of the OSCE region and organized by an OSCE Partner for Co-operation was the result of several years of preparation between the Moroccan parliament and our International Secretariat. I want to thank in particular our Moroccan colleagues for their continued engagement in our work and for driving this project.<sup>12</sup>

Back in Georgia, I had the pleasure to take part in the 16<sup>th</sup> South Caucasus Media Conference organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media under the theme “Strengthening media freedom and safety of journalists in a changing environment.” In my remarks, I recalled that our Luxembourg Declaration calls upon OSCE participating States to ensure that efforts to protect journalists should not be limited to those formally recognized and documented as such, but should also cover support staff, citizen journalists, bloggers and others active in this field. It also urges that OSCE countries develop strategies to eliminate the harassment of women journalists. On the margins of the conference, I exchanged with Harlem Désir to further discuss opportunities for further co-operation and common strategies to strengthen the impact of the OSCE’s work.<sup>13</sup>

Together with Secretary General Roberto Montella we then took part in a series of meetings and engagements in Belgrade, meeting with the President of the Serbian National Assembly, Maja Gojković, Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, representatives of the political opposition, civil society, and the Serbian Delegation to the OSCE PA. I noted the excellent co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, notably in the field of legislative reform and encouraged meaningful dialogue between all political factions to deliver concrete reforms.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>12</sup> *Security, environment, economic development and religious tolerance in focus at OSCE PA’s Autumn Meeting in Morocco*, 6 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/security-environment-economic-development-and-religious-tolerance-in-focus-at-osce-pa-s-autumn-meeting-in-morocco>

<sup>13</sup> *Attacks on journalists are attacks on democracy, says OSCE PA President Tsereteli in Tbilisi*, 10 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/attacks-on-journalists-are-attacks-on-democracy-says-osce-pa-president-tsereteli-in-tbilisi>

<sup>14</sup> *In high-level meetings in Belgrade, OSCE PA President and Secretary General emphasize dialogue, co-operation and reform*, 16 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/in->

In Belgrade I also addressed the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly, speaking about the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and strengthening international law. Together with Secretary General Montella, we had an interesting meeting with Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, for discussions on how to enhance co-operation between the OSCE PA and the IPU.<sup>15</sup>



I exchanged with a number of parliamentary leaders on the margins of the IPU Assembly, including with the President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Mustafa Şentop, as Turkey carried military operations in Northern Syria. Notwithstanding the complex issues involved, particularly terrorism and border control, I emphasized the need to normalize the situation in northeastern Syria and expressed hope for a quick end to the military operations. The Turkish Speaker provided useful information on Turkey's actions and objectives in Syria.<sup>16</sup>



With Secretary General Montella, we were in Strasbourg later that month and met with Klara Dobrev, Vice President of the European Parliament, and the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, David McAllister, to discuss OSCE-EU relations as well as common challenges of the European continent. We agreed on the need to enhance co-operation between the OSCE PA and the European Parliament and invest more on joint projects, including on election observation and conflict prevention efforts. On the margins, we held useful meetings with a number of MEPs from across the region and also met with former members of the OSCE PA leadership, including then-Commissioner Christos Stylianides and MEPs Isabel Santos, Ignacio Sanchez Amor, Tonino Picula and Roman Haider.<sup>17</sup>



[high-level-meetings-in-belgrade-osce-pa-president-and-secretary-general-emphasize-dialogue-co-operation-and-reform](https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/osce-pa-president-tsereteli-and-sg-montella-build-co-operation-with-inter-parliamentary-union-in-belgrade)

<sup>15</sup> OSCE PA President Tsereteli and SG Montella build co-operation with Inter-Parliamentary Union in Belgrade, 21 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/osce-pa-president-tsereteli-and-sg-montella-build-co-operation-with-inter-parliamentary-union-in-belgrade>

<sup>16</sup> Situation in N. Syria must be urgently normalized to avoid another humanitarian crisis, says OSCE PA President with Speaker of Turkish Parliament, 17 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/situation-in-northern-syria-must-be-urgently-normalized-to-avoid-another-humanitarian-crisis-says-osce-pa-president-with-speaker-of-turkish-parliament>

<sup>17</sup> Tsereteli and Montella meet European Parliament officials, highlight importance of OSCE-EU relations and parliamentary diplomacy, 24 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press->

In Strasbourg, I also took part in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament, hosted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The event, which gathered Speakers of Parliament from 47 countries on the Eurasian continent, provided an opportunity for productive discussions on common challenges in the region and on the role of parliaments and parliamentary diplomacy in international relations.

On the margins of the conference, we met with the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Liliane Maury Pasquier, the Secretary General of PACE, Wojciech Sawicki, and with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric. Our discussions underlined the excellent co-operation between our organization, as well the challenges we face in addressing effectively current political and security issues.<sup>18</sup>

At the very end of the month, I delivered my fourth address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, where I appealed to strengthen co-operation between all OSCE institutions in an effort to close the gap between what governments have committed to and what they do in practice. I underlined specifically the importance of conflict resolution in order to ensure security and peaceful development for the people in all OSCE countries. In this context, I highlighted the Assembly's efforts in Ukraine, where OSCE parliamentarians have offered assistance to those who are ready to engage in conflict settlement and worked to raise awareness about human suffering in the conflict-affected areas. I also drew attention to the suffering of Georgians as a consequence of the continued illegal occupation of territories of their country, and the urgent need for progress regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict.<sup>19</sup>



[2019/president-tsereteli-and-sg-montella-meet-european-parliament-officials-highlighting-importance-of-osce-eu-relations-and-of-parliamentary-diplomacy](https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/restoring-citizens-trust-a-key-responsibility-of-parliamentarians-says-tsereteli-at-european-conference-of-presidents-of-parliament-in-strasbourg)

<sup>18</sup> Restoring citizens' trust a key responsibility of parliamentarians, says Tsereteli at European Conference of Presidents of Parliament, 25 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/restoring-citizens-trust-a-key-responsibility-of-parliamentarians-says-tsereteli-at-european-conference-of-presidents-of-parliament-in-strasbourg>

<sup>19</sup> Three decades after historic changes in Europe, PA President stresses effective multilateralism in speech to OSCE Permanent Council, 31 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/three-decades-after-historic-changes-in-europe-president-tsereteli-underlines-need-for-effective-multilateralism-in-speech-to-osce-permanent-council>

## November 2019

Following up on the success of our Autumn Meeting in Morocco, I was in Egypt with Vice-President Pascal Allizard, our Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs, and Secretary General Roberto Montella for the first visit by an OSCE PA delegation since 2009. In Cairo, we met the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ali Abdel Aal Sayyed Ahmed, and we held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Hamdi Loza, as well as the Assistant Ministers in charge of Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, and Multilateral Affairs. We all agreed that stronger ties between both sides of the Mediterranean Sea are necessary to tackle security challenges in the OSCE area, including the fight against radicalization and terrorism, and the migrant and refugee crisis. We also met with Coptic Pope Tawadros II to exchange on the role of interfaith dialogue in promoting stability in Egypt. This visit was essential to nurturing personal relationships with our Partners for Co-operation, which are key to better understanding the realities on the ground and to build the trust necessary to work together.<sup>20</sup>

In preparation for Albania's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2020, I was in Tirana with Secretary General Montella to meet the President of the Republic, Ilir Meta, the Prime Minister, Edi Rama, the Speaker of the Assembly, Gramoz Ruci, as well as members of the Assembly and with representatives of the political opposition. This was the occasion to reiterate our full support for Albania's endeavour and to welcome the government's commitment to nurture the OSCE in a spirit of collective responsibility. I also encouraged all political forces to join efforts in contributing to the country's commitment to guide the OSCE in 2020.<sup>21</sup>

To close the month, I visited Yerevan for meetings with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, and Members of the Armenian Delegation to the OSCE PA led by Hayk



<sup>20</sup> *High-level OSCE PA visit to Egypt highlights security, individual freedoms and Mediterranean co-operation*, 8 November 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/high-level-osce-pa-visit-to-egypt-highlights-security-individual-freedoms-and-mediterranean-co-operation>

<sup>21</sup> *OSCE PA President and SG visit Albania for discussions on 2020 OSCE Chairmanship, domestic reforms and foreign policy priorities*, 19 November 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/osce-pa-president-and-secretary-general-visit-albania-for-discussions-on-2020-osce-albanian-chairmanship-domestic-reforms-and-foreign-policy-priorities>

Konjoryan. We had interesting exchanges on the deep and comprehensive reforms launched by Armenia following a peaceful transition of power in 2018, and I welcomed sustained efforts to firmly establish democratic institutions and practices in the country. I encouraged our Armenian colleagues to continue working closely with all OSCE institutions, and I offered the assistance of the Assembly's Special Representatives and Rapporteurs on relevant issues such as the fight against corruption, engagement with civil society, or combating disinformation.

Our meetings in Yerevan further offered an opportunity to discuss the status of negotiations in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and assess the added value of parliamentary diplomacy in this context. We all agreed on the need to build mutual confidence and refrain from inflammatory public statements in order to foster an environment conducive to greater regional co-operation.<sup>22</sup>

### **December 2019**

Our Bureau met in Bratislava prior to the OSCE Ministerial Council for productive discussions on our work and our priorities for 2020. We also used this opportunity to organize a separate discussion on the reform of our Rules of Procedure, considering the issues that arose during our Luxembourg Annual Session.

In my remarks to OSCE Ministers, I deplored the continued shortcoming in the implementation of OSCE commitments and called on political leaders to demonstrate resolve in joint efforts to overcome conflicts and other challenges. I underlined that recent tangible achievements in Ukraine were a sign of hope that progress can be made with the help of the OSCE, but that in several countries, anti-democratic attempts to consolidate state power limit what the OSCE can do. I above-all stressed that it has become necessary to renew obligations to provide real security.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>22</sup> *Democratic reforms and regional dialogue at crux of OSCE PA President's visit to Yerevan, 27 November 2019*, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/democratic-reforms-and-regional-dialogue-at-crux-of-osce-pa-president-s-visit-to-yerevan>

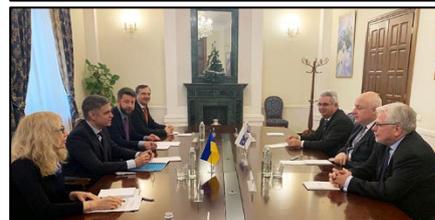
<sup>23</sup> *Political leaders must unleash OSCE's potential to benefit citizens, PA President Tsereteli says at Bratislava Ministerial Council, 5 December 2019*, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/political-leaders-must-unleash-osce-s-potential-to-benefit-citizens-pa-president-tsereteli-says-at-bratislava-ministerial-council>

I further discussed developments in Ukraine during a visit Kyiv in mid-December, accompanied by human rights committee Chair Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) and economic and environmental committee Rapporteur Elona Gjebrea Hoxha (Albania). This was the sixth time that a PA delegation visited Ukraine in 2019, underlining the high priority we have attached to the conflict.

In discussions with the Chair of the Verkhovna Rada, Dmytro Razumkov, Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko, members of Ukraine's OSCE PA Delegation and the Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as the leaders of two parliamentary groups, David Arakhamia and Artur Gerasymov, we also explored ways the Assembly can continue to support Ukraine as well as the incoming OSCE Albanian Chairmanship's priorities. We welcomed the resumption of dialogue between the leaders of Ukraine and the Russian Federation and the outcomes of a recent Normandy Four summit in Paris, and we expressed our continued support for a full and comprehensive ceasefire, additional disengagement zones, exchange of detainees, and further humanitarian and confidence-building measures to advance efforts to restore peace and Ukraine's territorial integrity in eastern parts of the country.

We also met again with the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, Ambassador Cevik, and Deputy Chief Monitor Antje Grawe, to be briefed about the challenges the SMM faces. We commended the crucial role the SMM continues to play in the disengagement process through dialogue facilitation, as well as reporting and verification at all stages of the process. We also stressed that it is imperative that the SMM gets unhindered access to effectively monitor all areas.<sup>24</sup>

I closed 2019 by serving as the Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observers for the election observation mission to Uzbekistan. This was the first time that the OSCE PA observed elections in Uzbekistan, after several years of good co-operation with our Uzbek colleagues. We



<sup>24</sup> In Kyiv, OSCE PA delegation encourages Ukraine to implement Normandy Four commitments to maintain conflict resolution momentum, 19 December 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/in-kyiv-osce-pa-delegation-encourages-ukraine-to-implement-commitments-made-by-normandy-four-leaders-to-maintain-momentum-toward-conflict-resolution>

welcomed improvements to Uzbekistan’s election law and greater acceptance of freedom of expression, but the absence of opposition parties, a continuing lack of respect for fundamental rights, and some serious irregularities on election day underlined that much work remains. We saw that the wide-scale reforms being pursued by the authorities in Uzbekistan have had a real and direct impact on these elections, but democratic development requires increased competition and respect for basic rights and freedoms, and we look forward to continuing our support for this process.<sup>25</sup>

### **January 2020**

In the middle of January, I joined Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) in Norway. This was an emotional visit which paid tribute to the 77 victims of the July 2011 attack in Utøya and Oslo. I noted that at times of increasing political divides and rising extremist ideologies, it is important to be extremely vigilant not to lose sight of our common goal to protect citizens from any terrorist threats.

Our discussions with members of the Storting (Norwegian Parliament), including its President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and Public Security, the Minister of Environment, the Mayor of Oslo, the Norwegian Correctional Services and the Norwegian Police Security Services, outlined how the Norwegian criminal justice system and legislative framework have been improved to address emerging threats. This encouraged us to work together to harmonize legislation among OSCE countries and improve mechanisms for data exchange.

Our inspiring exchanges with members of the Workers Youth League (AUF) and family members of victims of the 22 July attack also compelled us to redouble our dedication to democracy and tolerance, and do everything in our power to ensure that such cruel acts of violence do not happen again.<sup>26</sup>



<sup>25</sup> *Important progress in election legislation could not offset lack of real contest in Uzbekistan’s parliamentary elections, international observers say*, 23 December 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/important-progress-in-election-legislation-could-not-offset-lack-of-real-contest-in-uzbekistan-s-parliamentary-elections-international-observers-say>

<sup>26</sup> *OSCE PA members pay tribute to 22 July 2011 victims in Norway, stress need for effective counter-terrorism strategies*, 15 January 2020, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/osce-pa-members-pay-tribute-to-22-july-2011-victims-in-norway-stress-need-for-effective-counter-terrorism-strategies>

I was then in Vienna for my fifth and final address the OSCE Permanent Council. There, I reiterated the PA's support for the priorities of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship and expressed appreciation for Chair-in-Office Edi Rama's stated intention to further strengthening the Chairmanship's work with parliamentarians.

While the OSCE region continues to suffer from serious disagreements on key political and security issues, I underlined that multilateralism is the only way forward, and pledged the continued efforts of our Parliamentary Assembly in support of that objective.<sup>27</sup>

Ahead of the country's early parliamentary elections, I was in Azerbaijan for a series of high-level meetings with President Ilha Aliyev and Speaker Ogtay Asadov, as well as other officials, electoral stakeholders and representatives of political parties. I stressed the importance of a transparent and competitive election to enable voters to fully enjoy their fundamental rights, to uphold Azerbaijan's commitment to OSCE principles, and to produce a representative parliament able to support Baku's ambitious reform agenda.<sup>28</sup>

## **February 2020**

To begin February, I was in Washington, DC with Secretary General Montella for a series of engagements, starting with a seminar on "Future Leadership for Political inclusion in the OSCE Region" hosted by the U.S. Helsinki Commission. I found this to be an excellent opportunity to follow up on a call made by our Assembly during our Berlin Annual Session to establish a forum of young parliamentarians in order to foster greater mutual trust between OSCE participating States. Events like this strengthen the role of young leaders in the OSCE region and in the world, and it is my wish that we



<sup>27</sup> *Overarching goal of Parliamentary Assembly to help overcome differences, says President Tsereteli in address to OSCE Permanent Council, 16 January 2020, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/overarching-goal-of-parliamentary-assembly-to-help-overcome-differences-says-president-tsereteli-in-address-to-osce-permanent-council>*

<sup>28</sup> *Implementation of OSCE commitments is key to achieving credibility and trust in newly elected parliament, said President Tsereteli visiting Azerbaijan, 31 January 2020, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/implementation-of-osce-commitments-is-key-to-achieving-credibility-and-trust-in-newly-elected-parliament-said-president-tsereteli-visiting-azerbaijan>*

explore effective ways to institutionalize this kind of initiative.<sup>29</sup>

I also testified in front of the Helsinki Commission alongside the acting President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Attila Mesterhazy, at a hearing on “The Power and Purpose of Parliamentary Diplomacy.” I discussed the OSCE PA’s activities, challenges and achievements, and ways OSCE parliamentarians support and add value to the multilateral diplomatic efforts of governments and OSCE institutions. Our conversation discussed the role the Assembly plays in upholding our shared principles, in promoting democratic values, and in preventing and settling conflicts.<sup>30</sup> I was able to further present the work of our Assembly during a roundtable discussion on “Strengthening Democracy, Security and Transatlantic Cooperation” hosted by the German Marshall Fund, where I noted interest in our response to the emerging role of China in the international scene. Concerns over the deployment of the 5G technology were also on display in a forum on cyber security in South East Europe.

As part of this visit to Washington, Secretary General Montella and I met with Members of Congress, officials from the State Department, and Helsinki Commission staff to discuss current priorities of the Assembly and efforts to ensure security and stability in the OSCE region. I warmly welcomed the leadership and engagement of the U.S. Congress and government in the work of the OSCE and the OSCE PA, including through the continued support of the U.S. Helsinki Commission and the U.S. Permanent Mission to the OSCE.<sup>31</sup>

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In this period, I have also made statements when the PA voice needed to be heard.

<sup>29</sup> *Young parliamentarians gather in Washington D.C. to discuss the role of youth in leading responses to emerging crises*, 4 February 2020, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/young-parliamentarians-gather-in-washington-d-c-to-discuss-the-role-of-youth-in-leading-responses-to-emerging-crises>

<sup>30</sup> *President Tsereteli testifies in front of United States Helsinki Commission on the power of parliamentary diplomacy*, 6 February 2020, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/president-tsereteli-testifies-in-front-of-united-states-helsinki-commission-on-the-power-of-parliamentary-diplomacy>

<sup>31</sup> *In Washington, OSCE PA President underlines need for multilateralism and transatlantic co-operation to meet current challenges*, 10 February 2020, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/in-washington-osce-pa-president-underlines-need-for-multilateralism-and-transatlantic-co-operation-to-meet-current-challenges>



In August 2019, I reacted to developments in Kyrgyzstan, leading to the detention of former President Almazbek Atambayev, and I encouraged the authorities and members of the opposition to exercise restraint and for calm to be restored in accordance with the country's constitution and democratic values. I reiterated our Parliamentary Assembly's steadfast commitment to support Kyrgyzstan's democratic consolidation and efforts to build a society based on law and order. I also noted the need to continue strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law, especially as the country prepares for parliamentary elections in 2020.<sup>32</sup>



In October 2019, I welcomed the recent initiatives by the Russian Federation and Ukraine to agree on a roadmap for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, while underlining the firm stance that the Assembly has upheld in defense of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. I underlined that the conflict will not be settled by military means, and that the only way to alleviate human suffering in eastern Ukraine is a step-by-step approach with further confidence-building measures.<sup>33</sup>



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As you will note from this exhaustive report, I have continued to actively represent our Parliamentary Assembly throughout the OSCE region to support our priorities and maximize the impact of our activities. I highly value your personal contributions towards our collective goals and I look forward to continuing this important work with you in the coming months.



A handwritten signature of George Tsereteli in black ink.

George Tsereteli

<sup>32</sup> President Tsereteli's statement on developments in Kyrgyzstan, 9 August 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/president-tsereteli-s-statement-on-developments-in-kyrgyzstan>

<sup>33</sup> OSCE PA President Tsereteli expresses hope for positive developments in resolution of Ukraine conflict, 8 October 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2019/osce-pa-president-tsereteli-expresses-hope-for-positive-developments-in-resolution-of-ukraine-conflict>