



OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia)

Remarks to the 139th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Geneva, Switzerland | 16 October 2018

Fellow parliamentarians.

This year, 2018, marks 100 years since the end of the First World War. If we genuinely care for our constituents, we must use all possibilities to avoid similar tragedies.

This has been the goal promoted for over 40 years by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: building a common Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian community from Vancouver to Vladivostok – free, democratic, common and indivisible, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals.

To achieve this vision, we jointly have to mobilize the necessary political will to uphold our commitments.

This has been my consistent message to political leaders across and beyond the OSCE, most recently at last week's Meeting of the Speakers of Parliaments of Eurasian Countries.

Unfortunately, the OSCE PA remains very concerned about the state of the OSCE area, our Organization, and multilateralism overall.

War is back in Europe. Protracted conflicts continue to claim lives. Hybrid warfare has become more sophisticated. Nationalism is spreading, and with it an increase in racism and intolerance. Fake news and cyber threats undermine our democratic systems. And the impact of migration flows have not yet been met with a convincing and consensual response.

The size and scope of these new challenges necessitates closer collaboration and constant communication between our countries and parliaments, and the international organizations we represent.

In the field of human rights for instance, we must continue to ensure that democracy and the rule of law are respected in all our States. We continue to be very worried about the deteriorating Human Rights situation in several countries and, in particular, about the situation of the media, which are confronted with multiple threats.

One of our core responsibilities in the OSCE region as parliamentarians is election observation. This year we have conducted observation missions in Italy, the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Turkey and most recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We plan missions also to Georgia later this month and to the United States next month.

We have often discussed protracted conflicts in the OSCE area. They represent a political failure, the collapse of common and uniting interests, the rise of hatred and a step backward for civilization.

I have visited Ukraine twice in the past year. This has included a thorough visit to the contact line. We received moving testimonies from those living in the area immediately impacted by the hostilities and witnessed the suffering of civilians, in particular caused by cease-fire violations and mine explosions. I believe parliamentarians should work together to alleviate this suffering.

In the field of migration and countering terrorism, our Ad Hoc Committees, which some of you are familiar with, have been conducting fact finding missions and debates to prepare recommendations to address these difficult issues.

These have further underlined the need for greater international cooperation to tackle our joint challenges.

Today's debate on technological challenges and science is very appropriate, as discussions among parliamentarians can contribute to the political will necessary to harness the ingenuity behind these.

As demonstrated by the OSCE's work in the economic and environmental dimension, in particular through its robust network of field missions, enhanced co-operation on issues such as environmental protection, water management, and cross-border economic projects can be a first step towards building trust and promoting peace.

We need more focus on such issues, and much more international co-operation among parliamentarians if we are to address these and the many other challenges we and our citizens face.