



OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Pere Joan Pons (MP, Spain)

Address to the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, Austria | 11 September 2025

Madam Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to address you today for the first time as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, following my election last July in Porto.

Our Assembly — composed of 323 members representing over one billion people from 57 participating States — carries a profound responsibility.

I am deeply honoured to represent the parliamentarians of these 57 countries and to speak on their behalf — grounded in what unites us, rather than what divides us.

As parliamentarians, we must work in the interest of our regions, but always under the umbrella of universal values — dialogue, human rights, and peace — which we must uphold, without double standards, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Our citizens look to us for solutions — for dialogue, progress, peace, and security.

Ultimately, they expect hope for the future.

I firmly believe in multilateralism and dialogue to improve citizens' lives. Therefore, I encourage all participating States to increase their contributions to better fund our Assembly, so we can better serve the citizens we represent.

As President, I support greater parliamentary participation in election observation missions, recognizing the need for sustained resources to expand these essential activities.

In this light, I also would like to recognize all innovative funding mechanisms, such as the Helsinki+50 Fund, as important steps toward strengthening the OSCE's operational capacity to better respond to our current challenges as organization.

Funding OSCEPA, and of course also OSCE, is fueling democracy ladies and gentlemen.

Accelerated Globalization and increasing democracy were, 25 years ago, the universal road map we all thought was going to settle forever a world of collective progress and universal democratic values.

We were wrong.

This second quarter of the century has begun under the shadow of conflict, the erosion of democracy and the twilight of an unstoppable world of globalized trade.

And this is important to remember on a day like today — September 11, a day that forever changed the course of human history.

Let's be honest: we are experiencing a profound transition — an interregnum — from a liberal model of globalization to the resurgence of authoritarian systems that challenge the rules-based international order.

In such a context, one might assume that our role — as parliamentarians and multilateral institutions — is diminished or outdated.

But I firmly believe otherwise.

My vision is one of critical optimism.

Yes, we are witnessing a global authoritarian wave to undermine democratic norms. The liberal order built since Bretton Woods and the UN Charter is at stake. And yes, there are forces actively working to erode democracy.

At the same time, democracies remain strong — because their strength lies in their people. Just last year, more than half the world's population went to the polls. That alone is a sign of hope — and of resilience.

Still, we must face a sobering truth:

We once believed that politics had permanently replaced violence and war in resolving disputes.

Today, we are seeing more of the logic of power than the power of logic.

And yet — despite the scale of today's crises — it is far too early to give up on politics, on diplomacy, on peace, or on democracy.

No matter how turbulent the seas may be, I continue to believe — above all — in the strength of people and in the resilience of democracy.

But we must also acknowledge that when democracy fails to deliver — on education, housing, health, on war or the climate crisis — citizens may, out of frustration, turn toward models that dangerously echo the darkest moments of our past.

However, let's be clear: politics is not dead.

Nor are the institutions and frameworks we built in the post-war era irrelevant.

In fact, The 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act reminds us of two key truths:

First, that dialogue — and even détente — is possible, even in moments of extreme tension. History shows us that even during the Cold War, bridges could be built. Each of us must work to keep those channels of dialogue open.

Second, if security is one of the most urgent concerns of our citizens, then the OSCE — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — has a vital role to play. So, if dialogue is as the French say a *préalable* for security, we are more than ever needed in these profoundly challenging times.

Yes, there is war on European soil, and we have not yet been able to stop it.

But there was also a global pandemic — and now, it is behind us.

There have been failures — but also achievements.

The citizens we represent want dialogue, and this requires action for a better security in our region.

Dialogue and action. That is what drives me in leading our Assembly.

As President, I will work to ensure that the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly serve as genuine platforms for dialogue — among all members, with no exceptions. Without dialogue with all, there can be no security for all.

Dialogue is essential — but so is democracy. And can't be dissociated.

We aim to be a barometer of the state of democracy in our region, through meaningful election observation that improves democratic quality and, ultimately, people's lives.

We must be a tool for advancing vibrant democracies — with strong civil societies, independent media, and deeper respect for human rights.

For that, we will work closely with the OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirlioglu and with ODHIR to respond to emerging electoral challenges.

I look forward to collaborating with ODHIR Director Maria Telalian over the next two years, as well as with the current Finnish Chair and the incoming Swiss Chair in 2026.

As President, I also commit to advancing gender equality across our region.

More women in leadership positions— and true gender parity in OSCE national parliaments- is one of the most revolutionary steps in which we have to make real progress.

Since taking office, most of my new appointments have been women — but women leadership within our organizations, our parliaments and our governments is also essential.

We aim to be an instrument for dialogue in the pursuit of peace — and gender balance must be a key tool to achieve that. And with no doubt we are already working to make OSCE PA a more LGBTQ+ friendly organization.

My first official call as President was to Rada Speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk.

I expressed our shared desire for peace in a European Ukraine, and my full support for President Zelensky and the Ukrainian people.

We want peace in Ukraine. And for any solution, Ukraine has to be part of the negotiations, of any kind.

For that to happen, Russia must end its aggression and withdraw all forces.

And with no doubt it has to stop violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries like Poland.

Recent missile strikes in Kyiv, which damaged governmental buildings, diplomatic missions and claimed lives, are unacceptable violations of international law and an assault on diplomacy itself.

Today, I again call on the Russian administration — and President Putin directly — to engage in meaningful dialogue, beginning with a ceasefire and full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty.

We must also be a voice for the millions — of all faiths — who have lost hope while witnessing the ongoing tragedy in Gaza.

In one of my first official meetings, I expressed to the OSCE Secretary General my extreme concern regarding the situation in Gaza.

Actually, At our Autumn meeting in Istanbul, we will hold a deep discussion on the situation in the Middle East, and its implications for the OSCE region. And I hope there will be space for dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian representatives.

Dear members of the Permanent Council,

There can be no global security without peace and security in the Middle East. And, as we have been witnessing for the past two years, a military resolution of the conflict is not possible.

History will judge us — as it judged the horror of Srebrenica, now 30 years ago.

As President, I feel a moral obligation to condemn both the atrocities committed on October 7th, and the devastating loss of over 50,000 civilian lives in Gaza — men, women, and children.

Today I reaffirm the OSCE PA's grave concern over possible war crimes and other grave violations of international humanitarian law in the hostilities in Gaza, and the preliminary finding by the International Court of Justice of a plausible case of genocide on the part of Israel.

As I told the President of the Knesset last March in Jerusalem:

Democracies do not kill civilians as a weapon of war against terrorism. I urge Prime Minister Netanyahu to honour the democratic principles of his country and bring this horror to an end.

Y Permítanme que use mi lengua para expresar lo que siento. Siento que estamos asistiendo a un genocidio en live streaming, y todos debemos alzar la voz para pararlo.

Como dijo el sábado en el festival de Venecia Kaouther Ben Hania al recoger el premio del jurado por La voz de Hind, no se trata únicamente de memoria, esto va de urgencia.

This summer also brought hope in places where we have long played a role.

I welcome diplomatic efforts aimed at advancing peace and stability in the South Caucasus, including the historic Joint Appeal from Armenia and Azerbaijan and the closure of the Minsk Process, which is also a hurdle for the adoption of the Unified Budget.

To both delegations, I say: Your region has the potential to become a strategic hub — between East and West, North and South. United, the impact on your citizens could be transformational.

Peace brings progress, brings prosperity, brings happiness.

Let me also reaffirm our support for a democratic, free, and European Georgia.

I have had in the recent years many conversations with Georgia's current Foreign Minister, formerly the head of Georgia's OSCEPA Delegation.

I hope we can continue our dialogue with this important partner. And I appreciate the invitation to observe Georgian municipal elections.

But I must also urgently call on Georgian leaders for an end to human rights violations in the country, and a renewed respect for freedoms of speech and association.

Let me end with maybe the most important long term challenge we face as a global society in times of a globalized human mobility.

We need to accelerate a green energy and fair climate transition. We need to critically reduce global warming.

But without a fair and just transition for all, citizens may feel that the burden falls disproportionately on the middle and working classes — and if that happens, democracies will ultimately pay the price.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je voudrais souligner finalement que Notre engagement commun repose sur des principes universels : le respect des droits de l'homme, l'égalité entre les peuples, la dignité de chaque personne.

Même lorsque les conflits semblent l'emporter, aujourd'hui nous devons continuer à tendre la main, à écouter, à négocier.

L'OSCE è l'istrumento perfetto per farlo perchè è un ponte tra Est e Ovest, tra Nord e Sud,
tra cittadini e istituzioni.

Per fare de la regione OSCE una regione più giusta, più verde, e più democratica.

Distinguido Consejo Permanente, termino,

Al final del día, más allá de los informes, los discursos o las resoluciones, lo que cuenta es el impacto que dejamos en la vida de nuestros ciudadanos.

Creamos en la fuerza de la política, en la resiliencia de la democracia y en el poder transformador del diálogo.

Muchas gracias.