

Statement by Dr Petur Blöndal (MP, Iceland), OSCE PA Special Representative on the OSCE Budget

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Thank you Madam Chair

I will join the previous speakers and will thank Secretary General for his comprehensive presentation.

I regret that Ambassador Zannier cannot be present at the upcoming Autumn Conference of the OSCE PA to present the proposals to the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE.

I hope the Secretary General will be able to presenting the budget to the OSCE PA in the future. If I take a look over more than 10 years I am glad to see the huge improvement in these presentations.

In the past, my comments and recommendations on the OSCE Budget have included:

- Zero-nominal growth policy for the budget and no correction of the budget for inflation for many years is damaging because it means actually random budget reduction depending on the inflation while the tasks assigned to the OSCE are increasing.
- The budget planning should be kept result-oriented and long-term on the bases of strategic and needs and there should be an exit strategy – that is very important – for different projects and missions where appropriate, and including a contingency plan regarding the redirection of funds to other emerging or urgent activities.
- The OSCE PA should control the spending of OSCE the same way as the parliaments controls the spending of the taxpayers' money in our countries.
- The budged should focus on the field missions and less funding should be allocated to the Secretariat in Vienna.

Overall, I welcome the objective of the 2014 budget proposal to move away from the policy of zero nominal growth.

At the same time it is my hope that the planned budget increase is based on strategic priorities and needs-based considerations, as well as systemic program evaluation based on performance indicators and exit strategy for programs. My question to Mr. Secretary General: Are such mechanisms in place for the OSCE field missions?

Our field missions, whom we call the “crown jewels” of the OSCE, have in fact been the victims of ad hoc funding cuts in recent years, or so it appears to me.

That in turn can undermine the ability of the field missions to operate properly or deliver their mandate, thus damaging OSCE reputation and credibility.

For my last point, let me say something about much needed accountability and parliamentary oversight and cooperation between OSCE and OSCE PA.

The OSCE is paid by tax payers' money. On behalf of the citizens, the role of parliaments is to keep the executive accountable to the people.

At our last annual session in Istanbul, the OSCE PA adopted a resolution on “Enhancing Trust, Transparency and Accountability within the OSCE Institutions”.

The resolution proposed that the OSCE PA should approve the budget and the annual accounts of the OSCE for sake of transparency and accountability to our tax payers.

To facilitate both, it also calls on the OSCE PA to hire and pay the external auditors of the OSCE institutions.

It is important that this two parts of OSCE works close together on common Ideas. OSCE should keep in mind that their working money are decided in all of our parliaments so OSCE, you, need understanding and goodwill by the parliamentarians and you should use this big possibility you have in OSCE PA.

To conclude, I wish that in the end, the timely adoption of the 2014 budget will allow the OSCE to meet the expectation we all have for our organization and, most importantly, allow us to remain a relevant player in enhancing peace, democracy and stability in the OSCE area.

Thank you Madam Chair.