



**OSCE PA President Ranko Krivokapic**

**Address to the OSCE Permanent Council**

*31 October 2013*

*Vienna*

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great honour to address the Permanent Council today as the elected representative of 323 parliamentarians from across the OSCE region. Standing before you in the halls of the Hofburg Palace, I am humbled by the rich history of Vienna and its long tradition as a central meeting point of cultures and political ideas. With its proximity to the Balkans and Eastern Europe and its legacy as the capital of the former Habsburg Empire, Vienna has been a meeting point between East and West throughout its history. **The symbolism of this should not be lost on us and we should ever remind ourselves that our purpose in these halls is to bring our States together and work towards our common goal.**

I

As a citizen of a region that has benefited greatly from the OSCE, I deeply respect the significance of your work here. The OSCE goal of achieving

peace and security in Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asia has never been an abstract endeavour for me.

I have been involved first-hand, as an anti-war activist, in the ever-changing and often volatile political history of the Balkans, serving as a Parliamentarian in four states: Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, State Union Serbia and Montenegro and in independent Montenegro. As a multicultural society in the Mediterranean, it has bridged the gap between East and West, and often struggled as a result. Now, as the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I am eager to put my expertise to work for the benefit of us all and I hope to help prepare our organization for the challenges of the future.

## II

### **Challenges of the OSCE**

But I see a growing concern for the future of this organization and the values it has always defended. The work of building a democracy and protecting human rights is never over, and one of the strengths of the OSCE has been that it provides a forum for discussing this challenge and making progress together.

We must therefore focus on our strengths, the most significant of which is our inclusivity. As you well know, there is no other regional security organization that has the scope to include such a wide range of States from the Pacific Coast of North America to the Pacific Coast of Eurasia. **Our inclusivity must be complemented by raising the visibility of the OSCE in places where we are most needed and where stability is most vital to sustain security and peace in our region as a whole.**

**The world is changing dramatically. Thus, our response to challenges must be faster than ever.**

Instruments that we might solve them with are new. But the values and principles that have guided this organization ever since its establishment – they have to stay unchangeable. They were the forces of progress of our countries throughout history. Now we are called to greater responsibility and obligations.

### III

#### **Helsinki +40**

So as we approach the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, this is a time for the OSCE to once again take up the mantle of leadership, to push forward the frontiers of human rights and dignity.

I believe that we have a significant opportunity to further improve things and return to more productive communication channels. More open communication will, in turn, raise our legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

The citizens of our countries should take a much more active role in international co-operation, beyond the symbolism of declarations and addresses. The elected representatives need to have a more decisive role in the OSCE, more like the role they play in other similar parliamentary bodies. The elected parliamentarians should have a more active role in certain high ranking appointments and the adoption of the OSCE Budget. The concrete modalities of this new enhanced role of the PA are yet to be agreed upon, but we must be aware that the present situation in this respect is undeservedly diminishing the position of our organization.

A stronger Parliamentary Assembly would greatly enhance the transparency and legitimacy of the organization.

All of these recommendations can be found within our yearly declarations, which are meant for you as policy input in all three dimensions. These documents, on which you have been briefed by our Special Representative Amb. Andreas Nothelle, should give a clear indication on what

your parliamentarians, and, in turn, your electorate, expect of the OSCE. Studying our documents, you will find it refreshing that our Parliamentarians are able to agree even in the most controversial areas.

**If they managed in 1975 to achieve historic progress over the Iron Curtain, then it is unimaginable that now, within the same organization, the governmental branch, as well as the parliamentary branch cannot reach an agreement on the implementation of principles of parliamentary democracy. And the question remains without a reasonable answer because we lack a joint, integrated body that will develop the document for Helsinki +40 that our future depends upon.**

#### IV

#### **Elections**

Democratic elections are one of the most fundamental OSCE standards.

We have to create good synergy, and we can do that only if we all have full awareness of what is the job and position of every side in the process.

Because of many misunderstandings we have had so far, one of my priorities was to make better co-operation between our election observation missions and ODIHR. There are good signals for that, deriving from the most recent experiences in our mutual co-operation. The last experience in Georgia helps to establish a new basis for fully harmonized work within our OSCE family.

I will continue to be committed in restoring the full confidence within our family. Also, we should welcome a better and stronger co-operation between our Committee members in order to work together in finding the priorities in our three dimensions.

## V

### **Conclusions**

Our organization may never be perfect, nor meet the expectations of all its members, but we have to have the power to be ready to meet new challenges and be willing to constantly improve our work. I believe that with the good winds blowing on our back, while standing at the crossroads of history, we can make the right choices and OSCE will continue moving forward based on the hard work being accomplished within these halls and in the field. I am convinced that you, permanent representatives living and working in the place that for six centuries served as a centre of stable management over a large part of Europe, from the Atlantic to the East, have the capacity to strengthen this organization further, in order to effectively satisfy the vital interests of our citizens in the field of human rights, security and economic development in the decades to come.

I am certain that if our whole organization were to believe in itself as much as the youngest members and partnership countries today believe in the OSCE, it can lead us to long-lasting democratic prosperity throughout the OSCE world and beyond.

Thank you.