



Bridging differences, building trust

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Bringing together 320 parliamentarians from across the 56-nation OSCE region, including Europe, Asia and North America, the OSCE PA provides a forum for parliamentary dialogue, leads election observation missions, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

The Parliamentary dimension of the OSCE

The primary task of the 320-member Parliamentary Assembly is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue, an important aspect of the overall effort to meet the challenges of democracy throughout the 56 participating States of North America and Eurasia.

Recognized as a regional arrangement under the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. The Parliamentary Assembly, established by the 1990 Charter of Paris to promote greater involvement in the OSCE by national parliaments, is the oldest continuing OSCE Institution.

Voting for action

Members of the Parliamentary Assembly represent by their national parliaments, and meet several times a year to debate a wide variety of issues relevant to

the ultimate goal of all OSCE efforts: human security for all in the OSCE region. As elected representatives of the citizens of the OSCE participating States, they play an important role in maintaining security and stability in the region.

The parliamentarians debate, vote and pass declarations and resolutions addressing issues concerning the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, economic and environmental co-operation and political-military policies.



Enhancing OSCE visibility

Whether observing an election abroad or debating OSCE policy in their own parliaments, sharing expertise with their foreign ministry or visiting a foreign government, parliamentarians raise the visibility and credibility of the OSCE. These elected officials naturally enhance the profile of the OSCE, particularly in election observation.

Promoting diplomacy

Their elected status gives parliamentarians the independence and advantages that can at times open doors to dialogue in a way not available to appointed governmental representatives. When regional tensions flare, multilateral meetings of parliamentarians can foster communication and promote peaceful solutions.

Forums for dialogue

The Assembly regularly organizes topical seminars and conferences to spur inter-parliamentary dialogue, review OSCE commitments and exchange views with top international experts. These events place special attention on issues such as minorities, migration, organized crime, and freedom of religion, as well as regional topics, including security in the Caucasus, Trans-Asian parliamentary dialogue, democratic development in the Mediterranean, and environmental security in the Arctic and economic progress in South East Europe.

Election observation leadership

More than 4,000 parliamentarians from the OSCE PA have observed more than 100 elections since 1993, helping to establish the OSCE as the gold standard in the field of election observation. When the OSCE PA observes an election, the OSCE Chair-in-Office appoints a senior Member of the Assembly as the Special Co-ordinator to lead the OSCE short-term observers and present the statement of the observation mission on behalf of the whole Organization.

Co-operation with other Institutions



and Institutions in Vienna, Warsaw, and the Hague, as well as with the OSCE activities in the field.

The Assembly has regular formal and informal interaction with the other OSCE Institutions. The Assembly is represented at every level of official OSCE meetings and maintains a close working relationship with the OSCE Chair-in-Office, the Secretary General, other OSCE Structures

The Assembly has also developed extensive co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament and the Inter-parliamentary Assembly



of the Commonwealth of Independent States, all of which have observer status in the OSCE PA.

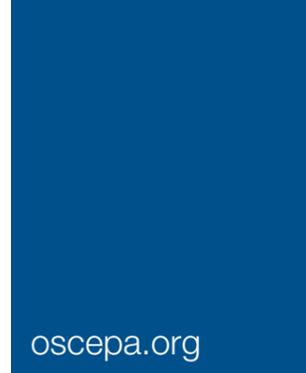
OSCE PA structures

Each July, the OSCE PA convenes its Annual Session, where Members follow a democratic process to elect Assembly officers and adopt declarations and resolutions that inform the work of the OSCE and national parliaments. Past declarations included recommendations that led to the creation of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Economic and Environmental Co-ordinator position.

Every February, Members gather for the Winter Meeting in Vienna, which gives the Assembly the opportunity to interact directly with the OSCE's governmental side.

The Standing Committee

The Standing Committee, comprised of heads of national delegations and Bureau Members, approves the budget, appoints the Secretary General, and guides the work of the Assembly.



The General Committees

The work of the Assembly is divided into three General Committees, which generally correspond to the three main sections of the Helsinki Final Act:

- I. Committee on Political Affairs and Security
- II. Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment
- III. Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Committee members elect a chair, vice-chair and rapporteur to one-year terms. Decision-making takes place by majority vote during meetings at the Annual Session.

The Bureau

The president, nine vice-presidents, treasurer, and the officers of the three general committees make up the Bureau. The president emeritus (immediately past president) is also an ex officio non-voting Bureau Member. The Bureau takes decision by a two-thirds majority vote and is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Standing Committee are carried out.



Special Representatives

Appointed by the President Special Representatives cover the South Caucasus, Afghanistan, Gender Issues, Human Trafficking, Mediterranean Affairs, Migration, South East Europe and the OSCE Budget.

Ad Hoc Committees

Established by the Standing Committee, Ad Hoc Committees have increased parliamentary attention on issues ranging from Belarus and Moldova to transparency and accountability in the OSCE.

The International Secretariat

Under the direction of the Secretary General, the International Secretariat supports the president and Assembly leadership and organizes all meetings, election observation missions and diplomatic visits.

The International Secretariat consists of 18 permanent staff members and eight research fellows based at a headquarters office in Copenhagen provided by the Danish Parliament and a liaison office in Vienna. The headquarters and the liaison office function as international diplomatic missions. Representatives of the liaison office participate in meetings of the OSCE executive structure, including the regular meetings of the Permanent Council.

The Secretariat serves as a communications link between national delegations and OSCE Institutions and as an information hub for Assembly Members as well as the general public.

Research Fellowship

A team of international fellows bring added research and linguistic capability to the International Secretariat. The Research Fellowship Programme is open to post-graduate students of the political sciences and law. More than 200 fellows from 29 countries have served in the programme, with many moving on to positions in their own governments and parliaments as well as with the OSCE and other international organizations.

Membership of the Assembly and voting strength

As a guest of honour, the Holy See receives two seats.

Albania (3)	Finland (6)	Malta (3)	Sweden (8)
Andorra (2)	France (13)	Moldova (3)	Switzerland (6)
Armenia (3)	Georgia (3)	Monaco (2)	Tajikistan (3)
Austria (6)	Germany (13)	Montenegro (3)	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (3)
Azerbaijan (3)	Greece (6)	Netherlands (8)	Turkey (8)
Belarus (6)	Hungary (6)	Norway (6)	Turkmenistan (3)
Belgium (8)	Iceland (3)	Poland (8)	Ukraine (8)
Bosnia & Herzegovina (3)	Ireland (6)	Portugal (6)	United Kingdom (13)
Bulgaria (5)	Italy (13)	Romania (7)	United States (17)
Canada (10)	Kazakhstan (6)	Russian Federation (15)	Uzbekistan (6)
Croatia (3)	Kyrgyzstan (3)	San Marino (2)	
Cyprus (3)	Latvia (3)	Serbia (4)	
Czech Republic (6)	Liechtenstein (2)	Slovakia (4)	
Denmark (6)	Lithuania (2)	Slovenia (3)	
Estonia (3)	Luxembourg (5)	Spain (10)	

Partners for Co-operation

Afghanistan	Algeria
Japan	Egypt
Republic of Korea	Israel
Mongolia	Jordan
Thailand	Morocco
Australia	Tunisia

OSCE PA in figures

Budget (FY 2012): 2.8 million euros
International Staff: 26, based in Copenhagen and Vienna

For more information about the Parliamentary Assembly or to apply for a Research Fellowship, visit www.oscepa.org.

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