



Address to the Ministerial Council of the OSCE
H.E. Ranko Krivokapic, President of the OSCE PA

5 December 2013 | Kyiv, Ukraine

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

It is my privilege to address you today for the first time in my capacity as the elected representative of 323 parliamentarians from across the OSCE area and, by extension, almost one billion people. I come from Montenegro, a small country that has greatly benefited from the OSCE as we endured periods of turbulence and worked to restore peace and security in that part of Europe. On a personal level, **I deeply appreciate the mission of our organization.**

As we are approaching the end of 2013, I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Ukrainian Chairmanship for its efforts in promoting and pursuing our common policies in many areas.

The first thing I did upon my arrival to Kyiv was to meet the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Volodymyr Rybak. I also have selected a delegation of OSCE Parliamentarians who will meet with leaders of the opposition today.

Peaceful protests are an important tool of public expression. Protests, initially, helped lay the foundation for democracy in Ukraine and the right to assemble publicly and peacefully must remain completely protected.

Our message is that democracy-building is often a painful process. In that process, there is simply no alternative to dialogue between political factions and between the people and the government, through democratically elected institutions. There is simply no alternative to the full implementation of the rule of law. I am convinced that Ukraine will come through this time of challenge with a democracy that has gained strength.

I

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every epoch has its challenges, but even when there are **similarities, each challenge calls for a new answer**. Let's show that, inspired by the Helsinki +40 process, we are capable of charting a noble and creative path **in times of new uncertainty**.

If we managed to achieve historic progress in 1975, with the Iron Curtain still very much in place, then let us capitalize on the momentum of our history. At that stage we were creating the family. Today we have the family, with developed institutions, instruments, and a legacy of many successes over these 40 years.

Today's world is not a bipolar, but a polycentric one and therefore more complex and less predictable. Let me be clear: **The OSCE can afford to be static in only one respect: its values**. Those values must remain indisputable, now more than ever, in our rapidly changing world.

II

Distinguished colleagues,

The nature of our Parliamentary Assembly should be to keep the forest in view and not get lost in the trees by spending too much time on individual issues. We were elected primarily to build the road to a safer future, and not to instantly appeal to the public.

In the OSCE area, parliaments have significantly strengthened their roles within domestic political systems during the past years. Elected parliamentarians in the OSCE family also need to have a more active role, especially in regard to making senior OSCE appointments and adopting the budget. Just as the OSCE works to strengthen democracy in its member countries, the strengthening of the role of the Parliamentary Assembly is the precondition for the enforcement of democratic processes **within the organization**.

I am very pleased with the cooperation I have had so far in this respect with Secretary General Mr. Zannier.

The Parliamentary Assembly continues to provide leadership in election observation and in its cooperation with ODIHR on these matters. I am pleased that cooperation with our partners has been improved in the last 6 months, as we aim to overcome the setbacks we have previously faced in this regard.

One thing the people expect is the strengthening of the OSCE's signature work -- the work of its field missions. The Parliamentary Assembly's Istanbul Declaration this year called for this body to "adopt full, effective and long-term mandates" for the field missions -- and we hope you will agree that is needed to reinforce the very backbone of what we do.

Also, during my visit to the United States week I had a very productive and promising meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, during which we discussion

deepening cooperation between the PA and the UN, with a focus on concrete cooperation on the ground.

III

Ladies and Gentlemen,

De Tocqueville wrote: “Nothing is more wonderful than the art of being free, but nothing is harder than to learn how to use that freedom.”

I am sure that the OSCE can be **a driving force, capable of ensuring freedom and democracy**, as well as a source of guidance, on how best to use them.

I am certain that if our Organization as a whole believed in itself as much as its youngest member or partner countries today believe in the OSCE, that would take us far on the road to long-lasting democratic prosperity. Let us be inspired – and take action -- to realize that potential.

Thank you for your attention.