The OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly

Bringing together 323 parliamentarians from across the 57-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 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue, an important aspect of the overall effort to meet the challenges of democracy throughout the 57 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
Representing their national parliaments, Members of the Parliamentary Assembly 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**

Some 5,000 parliamentarians from the OSCE PA have observed more than 130 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.

**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 positions.

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, and every autumn, an OSCE participating State hosts the PA’s Autumn Meeting.

**The Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee, comprised of heads of national delegations and Bureau Members, approves the budget, elects 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 International Secretariat consists of 17 permanent staff members and a rotating team of eight research fellows based at the 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 structures, 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.

The Bureau

The president, nine vice-presidents, treasurer, and the officers of the three general committees make up the Bureau. The president emeritus (immediately preceding 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, Central and Eastern Asia, Gender Issues, Human Trafficking, South East Europe, the OSCE Budget, Anti-Terrorism, Border Issues, Arctic Issues, the Baltic Sea Area, and Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance.

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 reform 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.
Membership of the Assembly and voting strength

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


Partners for Co-operation

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

OSCE PA in figures

International Staff: 24, based in Copenhagen and Vienna
Budget: (2015/2016): 3,102,000 euros

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