

**1st Preparatory Meeting of the 27<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental  
Forum: “Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area  
through energy cooperation, new technologies, good governance and  
connectivity in the digital era”**

*Address of Ms. Nilza de Sena,*

*Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Economic Affairs,  
Science, Technology and Environment*

**Session IV: Digital era and its impact on comprehensive security**

Vienna, 29 January 2019

Dear Madame Moderator,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank the organizers for their great work in putting together this high-level meeting and for inviting me to address you today. For me it is a great honour to do so for the third consecutive year in my capacity as Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment. This clearly demonstrates the strong level of co-operation achieved by our respective structures on 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension security issues!

The OSCE PA fully supports the Slovak Chairmanship's goal-oriented and pragmatic programme for 2019. We therefore wish Slovakia a very successful year, working towards a more secure and peaceful world for our citizens, through tangible advancements on energy co-operation, new technologies and digitalization, and good governance.

I personally take great pride in contributing to the important work conducted by the OSCE in the 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension, convinced as I am that parliamentarians have a key role to play in boosting economic and environmental security. Comprising 323 parliamentarians from the 57 OSCE participating States, the PA offers a vital forum where governments and citizens come together in the interest of promoting dialogue and transparency, allowing the voices of over 1 billion people in the OSCE area to be heard.

As such, the OSCE PA represents an inclusive platform for parliamentary dialogue. The economic and environmental dimension is, of course, at the core of these parliamentary exchanges. Each year, at the end of our Annual Session, the

Parliamentary Assembly adopts a Declaration meant to represent the collective voice of parliamentarians in the OSCE region, contributing also to the shaping of the OSCE and of national policies.

Last year, the Committee of Economic Affairs, Sciences, Technology and Environment mainly focused on fighting corruption and organized crime that threaten good governance and economic development. The devastating effects of climate change, as well as the disastrous consequences of conflicts on the environment, were central to our debates in Berlin. We further focused on transport links and corridors, on demographic challenges and on digital economy.

We also recognize that the digitalization of our lives is an overarching reality carrying many security implications. In this context, the **OSCE PA 2018 Berlin Declaration** acknowledges that the rapid digitalization process is generating substantial changes in all spheres of life, which underscores the critical role of national parliaments in keeping abreast of developments in this field and in updating relevant legislation.

Today, digital devices and information technologies play an integral role in our daily lives, with our communities rapidly being transformed into part of a fully digital society. In this era of rapid technological growth our economies should be ready to harvest the full potential of this transition, our societies adequately resilient to adapt to the new context without major traumas and our legal systems sophisticated enough to protect all citizens from any abuse.

In particular, the **legal protection of personal data** must be duly addressed. Personal information is constantly being stored by companies, which use these immense databases for performing analysis on group and individual behaviour. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the inappropriate use of these personal details can undermine basic privacy-protection

values and principles, such as individual autonomy, equality and freedom of speech, with dangerous implications on our society at large.

The way international trade is conducted has also significantly evolved thanks to Internet. Today, cross-border transactions can only be conceived through regular cross-border flows of data, regardless of the economic sector that a given company belongs to.

As such, international data transfers do not concern communications and IT firms only, but are a regular feature of today's way of doing business. For this reason, it is imperative that equally effective regulations are put into place to safeguard individual rights and privacy standards throughout the OSCE.

Against this background, I was very pleased that the 2018 OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Milan acknowledged the **prominent role that the OSCE PA plays in the digitalization of our economies**, as we certainly strive to add value in this field in partnership with the OSCE and its executive structures. Ultimately, parliamentarians' engagement is instrumental to build lasting political will for sustainable reform in all these fields.

Due legislative attention should also be given to the **impact of new technologies on the environment**. The growing use of digital devices in every-day life has resulted in a multi-faceted negative impact on the environment. From the production of electronic devices to their recycling, several problems have arisen: while there is a sharp increase in energy consumption, the huge amount of e-waste is creating serious challenges to proper disposal measures.

Both trends result in more pollution, negatively impacting on the quality of our water, soil and air, especially in developing countries, where much of the waste is being sent. Consequently, we should direct our efforts to develop improved waste

management systems and modernize national legislation in the fields of science and ecology.

Against this backdrop of fast transformation in almost every single aspect of our society, there is no doubt that the **labour market will also be affected**: some of the existing jobs will soon disappear, and new ones will be created. Thus, significant efforts in education are needed, as the great majority of the current students will work in professions that do not exist yet!

As stated in the *2018 Ministerial Council Decision on Human Capital Development in the Digital Era*, the creation of such new jobs must go hand in hand “with full respect for human dignity and human rights; sustainable and inclusive economic growth; and equal opportunities for the participation of women and men in the labour market”. To this purpose, adaptability, versatility and resilience are essential skills in terms of workforce and labour market policy frameworks.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In concluding, plenty of legal and policy adjustments will be required at national level to keep up with the transformations that our countries will undergo over the next decades.

I am therefore pleased to announce that parliamentarians in the OSCE region will continue to promote policy coherence and innovation through inclusive dialogue on all these important issues during our upcoming Winter Meeting in Vienna on 21-22 February 2019, as well as during our next Annual Session on 4-8 July 2019. Notably, the general theme of the Luxembourg Annual Session will be *Advancing Sustainable Development to Promote Security: The Role of Parliaments*.

In addition, the OSCE PA plans to devote its traditional Leinsweiler Seminar in May 2019 to explore the interlinkages between cross-border economic cooperation and conflict prevention and rehabilitation in the OSCE area.

Finally, rest assured that I will continue to inform our members about the outcomes of these timely debates and do my utmost to contribute to all future OSCE deliberations on this front, thereby promoting the complementarity between the governmental and parliamentary structures of this organization.

Afterall, I remain firmly convinced that only united can we achieve tangible results in pursuing regional stability and development for all our citizens, especially at this critical juncture.

Thank you!