

UK response to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I would like to welcome you back to the Permanent Council Madam President, and I thank you for your address.

We are at a critical time for Euro-Atlantic security. The OSCE with its 57 participating States offers a wide reaching forum which enables us to ensure that there is an inclusive discussion.

All participating States at the OSCE have an important role to play, including as you note the vital role of parliamentarians, to speak up when principles of international law and the Helsinki Final Act are violated. We must all defend robustly the principles and commitments to which we freely signed up and which are the bedrock of our shared security. We need to work together to uphold the non-use of force and respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is especially important now, more than ever. The UK strongly welcomes the clear role of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) in this regard, including as you highlight the PA's repeated condemnation of Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Madam President,

OSCE priorities and commitments across all dimensions need to be realised and implemented in partnership with parliamentarians. Parliamentary diplomacy and the role parliamentarians play in holding us to account is an important element of the work we do throughout the OSCE area. The PA can remind states of what is needed in areas ranging from human rights and support for democratic institutions to sharing knowledge and expertise on security challenges and military transparency. And through election observation and the sharing of experience of rule of law and the checks and balances which strengthen accountability of democratic institutions. I would like to thank the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its members for efforts in this regard and encourage these to continue.

We also share your views on the importance of the work the OSCE does to support women including through a focus on Women, Peace and Security. It is important to ensure that women have full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. The role of the OSCE can be boosted as we embed this in the organisation's efforts.

In conclusion – we welcome and support the important role the Parliamentary Assembly plays within the OSCE area. We look forward to welcoming the Assembly to Birmingham in July and we look forward to even greater co-operation and collaboration between the parliamentary and intergovernmental parts of the OSCE over the coming year as we collectively work to address the numerous challenges and opportunities facing our collective security.