

Address by the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly: UK response

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I would like to welcome you, Madam President, to the Permanent Council. Congratulations on your election to the role and thank you for your address. We share your views on the importance of the work the OSCE does to support women including through the Chair's focus on Women, Peace and Security and also Women's Economic Empowerment.

OSCE priorities and commitments – in all areas – need to be realised and implemented in partnership with parliamentarians. For this reason, 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 Parliamentary Assembly (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 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 its efforts in this regard, and encourage these to continue.

I was very pleased to join a panel last week for an OSCE Parliamentary Assembly discussion on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and UNSCR 1325 in the OSCE area. I spoke about why it is so important that women have full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes, the supportive role men can play, the importance of national action plans and the toolkit already available in the OSCE which can be boosted and needs to be implemented.

I would like to speak now in my capacity as Chair of the Security Committee. In my remarks to the Acting President of the Parliamentary Assembly at the Permanent Council earlier this year, I spoke about the important role that parliamentarians can play in shaping policy. I also expressed my desire to ensure continued engagement between the Security Committee and the Parliamentary Assembly under the UK's Chairpersonship. At our Security Committee meeting in July, devoted to the topic of 'tangible actions in preventing terrorism – terrorist financing, money laundering and passenger data exchange systems', I was delighted to welcome Mr Reinhold Lopatka, Vice President of the OSCE PA and Chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, to brief the Security Committee on the latest OSCE PA efforts to prevent and counter terrorism. The unique perspective and role that parliamentarians bring to the broader fight against transnational threats was an important and welcome contribution to our meeting. I would like to once again thank the Parliamentary Assembly for its continued cooperation with the Security Committee.

In conclusion – we welcome and support the important role the Parliamentary Assembly plays within the OSCE area. We recognise the important contribution made by Ambassador Bothelle over many years and welcome Ambassador Panceski to his new role from the start of October. We look forward to even greater

co-operation and collaboration between the parliamentary and intergovernmental parts of the OSCE in years to come.