



TO: OSCE PA BUREAU

THROUGH: OSCE PA SECRETARY GENERAL

MONTHLY REPORT for FEBRUARY 2023

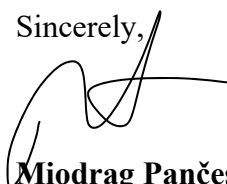
The Reinforced Permanent Council meeting, marking one year since the beginning of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and the OSCE PA Winter Meeting on 23-24 February were in the focus of the OSCE in Vienna in February. Main developments can be summarized in thematic order, as follows:

- As the City of Vienna has removed the last **COVID-19** precautionary measures from 01 March, it is expected that the Chairmanship-in-Office would soon follow suit and end the limit to the number of physical participants in meetings (currently 1+1), allowing for the usual working conditions in Hofburg.
- The **Reinforced PC meeting**, held on 24 February to mark one year since the beginning of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, has heard 54 statements (43 ministerial; 4 from partner countries), majority of which were online. As expected, speakers condemned the breaches of the international law as well as the OSCE principles and commitments by the Russian Federation, whose statement caused another walkout by most delegations. After the meeting, the OSCE Troika (CiO Osmani, Polish FM Rau, Finnish FM Haavisto) and OSCE SG Schmid, PA President Cederfelt and PA SG Montella made a joint statement demanding protection for the people in Ukraine and Russia to end its war.
- While the work under "no business as usual" conditions continue, Chairs of the Security Committee (Romanian Ambassador Stoian); the Economic and Environmental Committee (Austrian Ambassador Raunig); and the Human Dimension Committee (Irish Ambassador Callan) presented their plans of work and current activities to the **Permanent Council**. UNCHR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Gillian Triggs addressed another PC. SG Schmid's presented her report on the environment and the OSCE. Besides the RF war against Ukraine, the issue of the Lachin Corridor was considered at every regular PC meeting in February, causing heavy exchanges between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- After preceding tensions (*inter alia*: visas for RF and BLR delegates; calls for postponement/relocation; boycott by UKR and LIT; reception in the vicinity and controversial ball in the building; demonstrations) endangered holding of the **Winter Meeting**, the meeting itself was not as hectic as initially expected, with very good participation of the MPs (52 participating States, 247 MPs, close to 500 participants). Many thanks to Austria and Conference Services for exemplary cooperation and support. Due to the extraordinary circumstances, CiO Osmani has addressed the WM through a prerecorded video message; D/OSG Fratini has delivered the statement on behalf of SG Schmid; ODIHR Director Mecacci participated remotely; RFoM Ribeiro participated through a prerecorded video message and HCNM Abdrakhmanov in person.

- All discussions at the WM reflected very much those from the governmental side, resulting in a strong condemnation of RF war against Ukraine. The walkouts during the RF and BLR statements were orderly and included most delegates, while those remaining used the opportunity to waive the flags in support of UKR.
- Several former local **members** of the **SMM** continue to be **detained** by the RF (and tried by the Russian-controlled “courts” in Donbas) contrary to their functional immunity, and despite protests of the Secretariat and the vast majority of Delegations.
- The issue of **OSCE vehicles**, confiscated by Russian authorities for alleged “judicial investigation”, continues to cause concern. Secretariat’s requests for access to their assets have been denied.
- Opposing sides (RF/BLR and the EU) remain deadlocked regarding the Estonian application for the **2024 Chairmanship**. In the meantime, there’s an emerging understanding that the decision on 2024 Chairmanship needs to be made soon, to allow the incoming Chair to properly prepare. Still no progress on the **2023 Unified Budget**.
- The RF, dissatisfied with nexus between the environment and security (which is welcomed by others), continues to refuse to join consensus on the Draft **Decision on Economic and Environmental Forum**, scheduled for 20-21 February. At the same time, it is also unclear when the Conference on Environment and Security, envisaged by the Stockholm MC 2021 decision and postponed by the Secretariat from 17 March, might take place.
- During the month, CiO **Osmani** has presented **North Macedonia’s** Chairmanship priorities to top EU and NATO officials in Brussels; visited Moldova where he met with the Country’s leadership and the OSCE Mission to Moldova; together with the OSCE SG Schmid visited Türkiye and expressed support to the victims of the devastating earthquake; again with the SG Schmid, participated in UN meetings marking one year since the beginning of the RF invasion on Ukraine in NY; and presented its priorities to the US Helsinki Commission.
- In **Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC)** agenda under the Chairmanship of **Bosnia&Herzegovina**, discussions on the Code of Conduct as well as on the mine action in the framework of the Security Dialogue, attracted attention of the participating States. Bosnia and Herzegovina will be succeeded by Bulgaria in the second trimester.
- The **political dialogue** meetings of the Vienna Office with the North Macedonia’s Chairmanship continue on a bi-weekly basis providing the opportunity for exchange of information on the planned and recent activities.

Vienna, 06 March 2023

Sincerely,



Miodrag Pančeski

Ambassador, Special Representative