



TO: OSCE PA BUREAU

THROUGH: OSCE PA SECRETARY GENERAL

MONTHLY REPORT for JANUARY 2023

The work of the of the executive side of the OSCE in January was marked by the official beginning of North Macedonia's 2023 Chairmanship-in-Office and PA President Cederfelt's address to the Permanent Council, which, per usual practice, takes place in January and September of each year. Main developments can be summarized in thematic order, as follows:

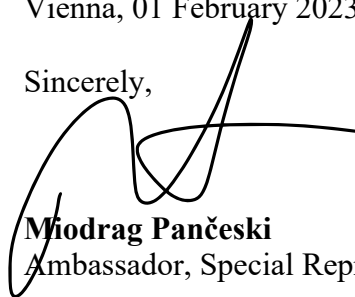
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** continues to burden the work of the Organization, limiting the number of physical participants in meetings to 1+1. However, the City of Vienna is expected to lift the last restrictions soon, allowing for the usual working conditions in Hofburg.
- The **Chairmanship** Team of **North Macedonia** has hit the ground running: the first week on the helm of the Organization was marked by CiO Osmani's visit to Kyiv and the OSCE Mission in Skopje, and by 4 PC meetings (out of which 3 were special: the opening; on Ukraine; and on Armenia). The inauguration of the CiO was traditionally attended by the PA Secretary General Montella.
- The **Program** of the North Macedonia's Chairmanship includes numerous priorities which have in focus the wellbeing of people ("**it's all about people**"), as the ultimate recipients of the OSCE services. They perfectly resonate to the positions and priorities of the PA.
- While the CiO will continue to work under "no business as usual" terms and will continuously address the Russia's war on aggression against **Ukraine**, one special PC meeting was held at the request of **Armenia** with Foreign Minister Mirzoyan focusing on the issue of Lachin Corridor, causing heavy exchanges with the Delegation of Azerbaijan. The President of the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance** (IHRA), Ambassador Ann Bernes (Sweden) spoke in the framework of marking the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, while the Foreign Minister of Iceland Gylfadottir appeared in her capacity of the 2023 CoE Chair.
- The presentation of PA **President Cederfelt** aroused great interest among participating States, with 14 respondents at the meeting. Further, the unprecedented number of her bilateral meetings (with Bosnia&Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Canada, Poland, USA, Ukraine, EU, North Macedonia, Turkmenistan and with the Coordinator on Trafficking of Human Beings) were used for talks on specific topical issues of importance for the work of the PA (e.g. Ukraine's participation at the WM).
- Particular attention of the participating States was devoted to the confiscation without prior notification of OSCE **vehicles** by the Russian authorities for the purpose of alleged "judicial investigation" of the work of the SMM. It should be noted that the OSCE Secretariat has not been notified of any seizure protocols, nor has any request to access their assets or information been made to them.
- Several **members** of the **SMM** that are still **detained** by the RF contrary to their functional immunity, remain in focus of the Delegations. Their continuing detention is

unacceptable from the point of view of the Secretariat and the vast majority of Delegations.

- **Bosnia&Herzegovina** has commenced its chairing of the **Forum for Security Cooperation** (FSC) in the first trimester of 2023. Discussion on *SALW/SCA in South-East Europe: Achieving Security through Cooperation* in the framework of the Security Dialogue attracted great attention among the participating States.
- The **first political dialogue** meeting of the Vienna Office with the North Macedonia's Chairmanship was held on 09 January. The meeting was very productive and mutually informative, and will continue on a bi-weekly basis.
- PC Decision on forwarding the Draft Decision on the **time and place of the next Ministerial Council** meeting (30 November – 01 December 2023) to the MC was adopted through silence procedure last week, although this decision is per usual practice adopted at the previous Ministerial Council meetings. Unfortunately, due to the refusal of the RF to join consensus, this was not possible for the Draft **Decision on Economic and Environmental Forum** which was scheduled for 20-21 February. It is unclear if the continuing consultations will result in the timely decision.
- **Finland** in the capacity of the Chair of Structured Dialogue continues bilateral consultations on the further work of the process. **Romania** took over from Canada the Chairmanship of the Security Committee; **Austria** continues with the Economic and Environmental Committee, while **Ireland** takes over chairing over the Human Dimension Committee from Norway. So far Austria and Romania have held their inaugural meeting to present its priorities – which were supported by the PA.
- There is still no progress on deciding on the **2024 Chairmanship**: Estonian application continues to be supported by the EU and blocked by the Russian Federation and Belarus. No new applications and no recent negotiations on the issue. Although discussions on the **2023 Unified Budget** are taking place, any headway (let alone the consensus) remains elusive.

Vienna, 01 February 2023

Sincerely,



Miodrag Pančeski
Ambassador, Special Representative