



*Delegation of the Republic of Latvia
to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly*

Reg. No. LV 900 000 283 00 • Jēkaba iela 11, Rīga, LV-1811, Latvia
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The Secretary General

Riga, 9 March 2023

Dear Mr Secretary General,

Thank you for your letter of 1 March in which you raised your concerns regarding my remarks at the Standing Committee Meeting in Vienna regarding Ms Daria Boyarskaya, Head of the OSCE PA Vienna Office, within the context of discussing the financial report of OSCE PA operations.

I want to start by reaffirming my deep respect for the OSCE and its parliamentary assembly as a significant format of parliamentary diplomacy among democratic nations. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Standing Committee forms an essential pillar of parliamentary oversight. During my time as part of this Standing Committee, I am determined to give whatever support I can to the betterment of the Committee and OSCE PA in its essential tasks.

Thank you for your analysis, and I assure you that I am actively considering the issues you raise in detail.

Regarding Ms Boyarskaya, I must first reiterate that while I fully respect the OSCE PA Rules of Procedure, Staff Rules and Code of Conduct regulating the conduct of their respective parties operating within the OSCE PA, I believe that within the confines of the Standing Committee and its duties, parliamentary scrutiny is more than welcome and should not be seen as a vehicle to undermine or thwart any day-to-day processes of the OSCE PA.

At the same time, the significance of the office of the Head of the OSCE PA Vienna Office allows for strict scrutiny from the taxpayers' representatives that fund said organisation's operations. As you well know, under the general guidance of the Special Representative and the overall leadership of the Secretary-General, the Head of the OSCE PA Vienna Office ensures operational contacts, cooperation and coordination with parliaments, governments, and stakeholders from participating states. Within this framework, the Head of the OSCE PA Vienna Office participates in preparations and undertaking official visits by OSCE PA officials and supports election observation missions.



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The significance above within the institutional hierarchy of OSCE PA, in combination with the decision of one of the OSCE participating states, Poland, to declare Ms Boyarskaya a *persona non-grata*, arguing that the entry and stay of Daria Boyarskaya on the territory of the Republic of Poland poses a threat to the security of the state and the international position of the Republic of Poland. In your letter detailing Ms Boyarskaya's professional background, the detail of her employment at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as an interpreter for the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has, for some reason, been left out, despite it providing valuable context and explanatory background for my inquiry you have detailed your concerns about. Furthermore, as stated by the Internal Security Agency of Poland in their recommendation regarding Ms Boyarskaya's declaration as a *persona non-grata*, her activity to date clearly places her as a supporter of the regime and policy of the Russian Federation, which violates the norms of international law.

According to publicly available information, Ms Boyarskaya joined the OSCE Vienna office in February 2021. Therefore, I find your statement that Ms Boyarskaya was hired to OSCE PA "before Russian aggression" somewhat misleading, to say the least – I am sure you would agree with the apparent fact that Russian aggression against Ukraine began in 2014.

You note that the OSCE PA Standing committee functions as the highest administrative institution of the OSCE PA; thus, "*staff issues are not to be discussed in public unless they are anonymised or part of purely statistical data*". This argument, and your implying that I have brought up staff issues to the forefront of a public debate, calls for more clarification and reference to internal rules on and around staff issues. Otherwise, this is a very general paragraph that implies an accusation rather than detailing any specific breaches of rules of conduct.

And most importantly, I must again reiterate that my comments regarding non-specific employees of the OSCE PA were made as part of my duties as a member of the Standing Committee, which approves the budget, elects the Secretary General, and guides the work of the Assembly. Considering that the participating states fund this organisation, to which we are accountable and from which questions have been received regarding the operations of OSCE PA, my comments were made in the context of several delegations' initiatives advocating for the necessity of a general financial audit to re-evaluate the efficiency of operations of the OSCE PA Secretariat. Considering that statements were made regarding the need to reduce expenditure, my comments regarding the OSCE PA Vienna Office – as the newest addition to the OSCE PA balance sheet – were appropriately on-point and can only be seen as referencing the structure and institutions rather than specific employees.

Overall, I must be frank in evaluating your letter and its contents: you are mainly very vague. You need to provide precise references to the law and sections that may have been infringed via my statements, making it difficult to assess to what extent your warnings of potential legal consequences are to be considered genuine or as merely intended to intimidate. Without the ability to review the recordings of my clear statements and instead going by approximate re-telling and referencing determinations by an unnamed "legal counsel, " arguments can be made that you, Secretary General, are making



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serious allegations against me instead. The bare mention of possible criminal prosecutions for the innocuous, even by your retelling, comments made by a parliamentarian at an international institutions' parliamentary assembly is an outrageous affront to all that parliamentarism and multilateralism stand for and what the OSCE parliamentary assembly supposedly stands for.

As you have supposedly quoted me precisely, you must agree that no direct accusations were made that could be treated as defamation or libel. Yet, you refer to "acts subject to criminal prosecutions" without providing any further information about this – this is concerning. Interestingly, the secretariat refuses to share the full video recording of the Standing Committee "upon advice from the legal counsel". It has come to my attention that several delegations regard this as inappropriate. In contrast, I must insist that such actions create a dangerous and far-reaching precedent of legitimising organisational censorship of the legitimate views and proposals parliamentarians make. The Standing Committee meeting was broadcast online, and attempts to suppress the recording's publication only leaves room for speculation, disinformation and unfounded allegations.

Considering all the details above, I request the following:

- Provide complete information on the "legal counsel" you reference in your letter, referenced in the minutes of the Standing Committee meeting disseminated via e-mail to the delegates participating in the Winter Session of OSCE PA in 2023. Please provide information on which person(s) provided said legal counsel and what this legal counsel entailed;
- Provide the full video recording of the Standing Committee meeting, including an unedited video recording of the section "Reports on Activities of the OSCE PA", including the PRESIDENT addressing the Standing Committee, the interventions by speakers, and the responses to the comments by the Secretary General (as per Minutes from the Standing Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Vienna, Friday, 24 February 2023);

In conclusion, Mr Secretary General, in your three-page letter, you have failed to mention anything I have supposedly said that would be false or misleading. Yet, you insist that your decision not to publish the recording of the Standing Committee of this Winter Meeting was made to avoid "*getting the OSCE PA – and you – in legal difficulties because of the remarks I made*". Such allegations and insinuations on the part of the Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly are a gross insolence to the institution of parliamentary assembly and its principles, and is a chilling breach of confidence in the administrative leadership of the institution and have a detrimental impact on essential freedoms and rights in parliamentary democracies.

At its face value, my statement was a political speech on an issue of political interest. As such, I have difficulty interpreting your statements as anything other than an attempt to find a reason to legitimate the limiting of my right of freedom of speech on this essential platform and, by extension, legitimise the censorship and, under this pretence, limit the publication of opinions and thoughts of the legitimate representatives of the OSCE PA. By providing the documentation above, information and via your responses, you will undoubtedly assure me this is not the case and that the answers I receive



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from you will be clear and to the point. The Latvian delegation is in consultation on any further actions or decisions regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping lines.

Head of Delegation
Saeima of the Republic of Latvia