

Sen. Roger F. Wicker, *Mississippi*
Chairman

Rep. Joe Wilson, *South Carolina*
Co-Chairman



July 21, 2026

The Honorable Pere Joan Pons Sampietro
President
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Tordenskjoldsgade 1
1055 Copenhagen K
Denmark

The Honorable Roberto Montella
Secretary General
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Tordenskjoldsgade 1
1055 Copenhagen K
Denmark

Dear President Sampietro and Secretary General Montella,

I am profoundly concerned the alarming decision to shift the host the July 2027 Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from Charleston, South Carolina, USA, to Belgrade, Serbia. Recent statements by senior Serbian government officials, together with Serbian continued alignment with war criminal Putin, raise serious questions about whether Serbia is an appropriate host for one of Europe's premier institutions dedicated to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. As recently as this month, Serbia's Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government, Snežana Paunović, repulsively stated: "If I were Slobodan Milošević, I would have committed ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1998."¹ Such a statement is deeply disturbing. It appears to express approval for one of the darkest chapters in the modern history of the Balkans, a period marked by mass murder and widespread atrocities, forced displacement, and immense human suffering. Remarks that appear to endorse ethnic cleansing are fundamentally incompatible with the principles upon which the OSCE was founded.

Charleston is the ideal location for the assembly as an international city to be so convenient for President Donald Trump to attend and proclaim transatlantic unity. In addition, the leading candidate for Governor of South Carolina Alan Wilson, my son, would provide a warm welcome of Southern hospitality to President Trump and all Parliamentarians.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has consistently championed reconciliation, accountability, and respect for human rights. Awarding the privilege of hosting its Annual Session to a country whose senior officials make statements appearing to justify or endorse ethnic cleansing risks undermining the Assembly's moral authority and sending the wrong message to victims of past atrocities throughout the OSCE region. We are all hopeful the extraordinary people of Serbia will initiate reforms for future European Union membership and reduced Russian influence.

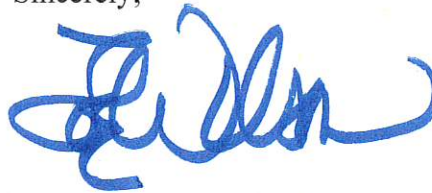
¹ https://www.ansa.it/nuova_europa/en/news/countries/serbia/2026/07/14/if-i-were-milosevic-i-would-have-committed-ethnic-cleansing-in-kosovo-minister_41af38ee-3a03-462f-88cf-52a5d2fe6de6.html

Throughout Putin's murderous 2022 invasion and losing war against the people of Ukraine, Serbia has remained one of the few European countries to refuse to impose sanctions on the Russian Federation, while continuing to deepen political, economic, and energy ties with Moscow. Serbia has maintained its association with Russia, preserved regular high-level engagement between Presidents Aleksandar Vučić and war criminal Putin, and sustained military-technical cooperation through the acquisition of Russian weapons systems and joint exercises. Serbia has continued to rely on oil and natural gas purchases from the Russian Federation; while allowing Putin to purchase Serbia's largest oil company, Naftna Industrija Srbije (NIS). The Serbian government has also continued a visa-free regime with Russia, allowed Russian state media to operate freely, and maintained Russian cultural and commercial institutions, while signing new bilateral economic cooperation agreements. Serbia's broader policies have consistently preserved war criminal Putin and his political, economic, and diplomatic influence in the Balkans, standing in contrast to the coordinated response adopted by most OSCE participating States following Russia's murderous invasion of Ukraine.

These concerns are compounded by Serbia's continued close political relationship with the Russian Federation. While nearly all participating nations have taken decisive action to support Ukraine and defend the international rules-based order following Russia's full-scale invasion, Serbia has repeatedly maintained close ties with Moscow and has often positioned itself at odds with the broader Euro-Atlantic community. At a time when the OSCE continues to confront the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it is particularly important that the Assembly's host fully reflects the organization's commitment to peace, sovereignty, and democratic values. The Annual Session is more than a logistical gathering; it is a symbolic affirmation of the OSCE's shared principles. The selection of a host country should reinforce those principles rather than raise questions about them.

Accordingly, I urge the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to restore holding the 2027 Annual Session in Charleston, South Carolina, USA, as a host that more clearly demonstrates a commitment to the values embodied in the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE's enduring mission.

Sincerely,



JOE WILSON

Head of U.S. Delegation to the OSCE PA
Chairman, First Committee of the OSCE PA

CC: The Honorable Pjer Šimunović, Ambassador Republic of Croatia
CC: The Honorable Iztok Mirošič, Ambassador Republic of Slovenia
CC: The Honorable Zoran Popov, Ambassador of the Republic of North Macedonia
CC: The Honorable Sven Alkalaj, Ambassador of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CC: The Honorable Jovan Mirković, Ambassador of Montenegro
CC: The Honorable Ilir Dugolli, Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo
CC: The Honorable Ervin Bushati, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania