


OSCE PA South East Europe Delegations highlight science diplomacy as a tool for regional co-operation and security

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VIENNA, 26 May 2026 – Parliamentarians and distinguished academics from across South East Europe gathered online today for the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of South East Europe Delegations to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. The meeting focused on the role of science diplomacy in strengthening regional co-operation, democratic resilience, and security.

OSCE PA Vice-President and Special Representative on South East Europe Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus) chaired the meeting, underlining the growing political commitment to regional integration and dialogue.

"The increasing frequency and high-level attendance of our gatherings truly reveal the strategic importance and genuine political will placed behind greater co-operation and integration across South East Europe," Hadjiyianni said.

He stressed that science diplomacy can serve as a crucial catalyst for regional development, evidence-based policymaking, and the advancement of the region's shared European perspective, as reflected in the OSCE PA's Porto Declaration of 2025 and its Resolution on Strengthening a Positive Agenda for Co-operation in the Western Balkans.

Opening the meeting, OSCE PA President Pere Joan Pons (Spain) emphasized the importance of multilateralism, scientific co-operation, and evidence-based governance.

"Science diplomacy has become central to political dialogue and is no longer secondary to it," President Pons said.

President Pons also highlighted the role of parliamentarians in "translating scientific consensus into political will," adding that scientific collaboration demonstrates "that co-operation is possible."

In his address, OSCE PA Roberto Montella Secretary General emphasized the importance of dialogue and international co-operation in science and research.

"Meetings such as this are extremely valuable," Montella said. "Dialogue that brings together people across borders is essential not only for your countries and this region, but also for the wider international community."

He noted that parliamentary diplomacy has an important role to play in advancing science and international co-operation, stressing that elected representatives can strengthen ties among universities, research centres, and institutions through supportive legislation and adequate funding for education, research, and innovation.

The forum also featured opening remarks by OSCE PA Vice-President Gábor Hajdu (Romania) and Vice-Chair Jevrosima Pejović (Montenegro).

"Scientific co-operation creates many opportunities to generate mutual and region-wide progress, acting as an important tool for bringing South East Europe closer to the European Union," Hajdu said.

"Evidence-based decision-making is one of the most important benefits brought by science diplomacy, especially when fresh perspectives are welcomed and an inclusive approach is adopted," Pejović said.

Participants also heard presentations from leading academics and experts from across the region, including Roko Žarnić (Slovenia), Vlatka Rajčić (Croatia), Antonia Moropoulou (Greece), Nikoleta Đukanović (Montenegro), Marinos Ioannides (Cyprus), and Paul-Claudiu Cotîrleţ (Romania).

The academics shared insights on natural disaster prevention, scientific mechanisms for regional co-operation, and collaboration in preserving cultural and historical heritage. Particular emphasis was placed on supporting and retaining young scientists and researchers, as well as on strengthening the institutional framework for science diplomacy.

Participants agreed on the importance of academic co-operation, knowledge exchange, and joint research projects across the region.

Discussions throughout the forum focused on strengthening scientific co-operation, supporting democratic resilience, and fostering practical policy solutions to shared challenges across South East Europe.

Closing the meeting, Vice-President Hadjiyianni called on parliamentarians to make scientific co-operation "one of the guiding principles of parliamentary diplomacy."

The event was attended by 25 participants, including parliamentarians, academics, and parliamentary staff from across South East Europe.

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