Published: 26.03.2024

Vice President at the IPU Assembly: Unique historical perspective of the Baltic States offers invaluable insights into the limitations and potential of parliamentary diplomacy

The 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held on 23-27 March 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland, provided a global platform for parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. The agenda, under the overarching theme "Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding", aimed to foster dialogue and collaborative action in addressing some of the most pressing challenges worldwide.

The Assembly focused on fostering exchanges, discussions, and actions among delegates towards enhancing international peace and security. Key topics of discussions included the social and humanitarian impacts of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence, and partnerships for climate action focusing on access to affordable green energy. These dialogues underscored the urgent need for innovation, responsibility, and equity in addressing global challenges.

Baltic Assembly contributes to the dialogue

At the Assembly, the Vice President of the Baltic Assembly Jānis Vucāns delivered a speech, encapsulating the essence of parliamentary diplomacy as experienced by the Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. He emphasized the transformative power of parliamentary diplomacy, which the Baltic States used to navigate their journey from Soviet occupation to regained independence.

Reflecting on the historic solidarity action "Baltic Way" and subsequent democratic elections, Jānis Vucāns highlighted the effective use of parliamentary diplomacy in

achieving de facto and de jure independence for the Baltic States. This journey not only reestablished national sovereignty but also laid the foundations for societies where human rights, democratic laws, and governance are highly respected.

The speech also acknowledged the current geopolitical tensions and the striking realities in the region. With Russia departing from principles of parliamentary diplomacy, the unique historical perspective of the Baltic States offers invaluable insights into the limitations and potential of parliamentary diplomacy in confronting aggression and supporting Ukraine.

The positon of the Baltic Assembly is clear: parliamentary diplomacy can play a pivotal role in international efforts to uphold peace and security, especially in providing unwavering support to Ukraine amid ongoing conflicts. Address by Jānis Vucāns highlighted the Baltic understanding of the challenges posed by authoritarian regimes, emphasizing the necessity of international solidarity and action to support Ukraine, ensuring its needs are met swiftly and efficiently, and standing firm against violations of international law.

The participation of the Baltic Assembly at the 148th IPU Assembly reinforces the vital role of regional parliamentary bodies in global efforts to address international security, human rights, and sustainable development. Through its advocacy and actions, the Baltic Assembly continues to make an important contribution to the dialogue and initiatives that aim to build a more peaceful and understanding world.

Vice President Jānis Vucāns and Member of the Presidium Enn Eesmaa represented the Baltic Assembly at the 148th Assembly of the IPU.

Photos

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