

**Honourable President,
Honourable Speakers,
Colleagues,**

Check against delivery

Allow me to begin by **expressing my gratitude** to our esteemed Turkish hosts, for organizing this assembly at a critical time of global challenges.

We gather here today in **Istanbul – a city that has built bridges for centuries, uniting continents and cultures.**

As a host to major international organizations, Austria is honoured to engage in this General Debate under the theme *“Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations,”* reaffirming our dedication to **diplomacy, dialogue, and global peace.**

I was somewhat astonished to hear Austria mentioned in a negative context, referencing former politician Jörg Haider.

Isn't this exactly why we are here? To promote open dialogue instead of deepening divisions through political hostility or one-sided narratives?

If this forum stands for anything, it should be the **willingness to engage respectfully** — even where views differ — and to confront complex histories with nuance, not reduction.

This goal of diplomacy, dialogue and global peace, is not abstract.

It is a current political mandate for parliamentarians to **take responsibility and strengthen democracy, trust, and most importantly dialogue** - laying the foundation for future generations.

Hope is nurtured where people feel their concerns **are heard and represented**. It arises from **security, economic stability, and trust** that political decisions serve the public interest.

Hope grows where states take responsibility for their citizens, their culture, and their future. This ladies and gentlemen, **begins at home in our Parliament.**

Peace is not created by ceasefires alone - this is only where it begins. In many conflicts, including the Middle East, the **situation remains tense.**

Peace must be actively secured. **Sovereign and strong nations** are the basis of stable international relations.

With this in mind, we must ask ourselves: **how do we build a basis for political dialogue instead of aggression?**

Peace and stability lead to **global economic stability**. It requires **fair rules** - counter protectionism, lower trade barriers, limit tax avoidance by multinational corporations, and **controlled migration policies**. Economic cooperation must **remain balanced, and respect national sovereignty**.

Peacekeeping also requires the cooperation through stable and effective multilateral institutions. The ongoing debate on reforms of the United Nations and other global bodies, reflects this necessity.

The Austrian Parliament has become a centre for education in democracy, supporting young people in understanding and exercising their rights in a parliamentary democracy, and to actively engage in society and politics.

Furthermore, the **Austrian government maintains a strong commitment to citizens' initiatives and referendum petitions**. We also uphold **free and secure elections for all our citizens**. Another **pillar of our constitution is neutrality**, which strengthens our position as a small, but stable and secure state.

The **Austrian Parliamentary Association** provides a platform for Members of Parliament from all parliamentary parties, to **come together and establish a solid foundation for dialogue and constructive exchange**.

Furthermore, **Austria, as host and foundation for many international organizations**, stands as a symbol of dialogue and the pursuit of peace and hope.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Parliamentarians are more than lawmakers. They build bridges - connecting people across **generations, regions, and political ideologies**.

Despite all obstacles, differences, and challenges, **dialogue is the only tool that unites us**. If we fail to sustain it, conflict and war will follow.

To nurture hope, secure peace, and ensure justice for future generations, we must remain firmly grounded in **responsibility, rational judgement, and strong democratic institutions**.

Only then, can we build a future that is not only aspirational, but truly sustainable.