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United States Mission to the OSCE

2018 Unified Budget Proposal

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 5, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States welcomes the 2018 Unified Budget Proposal and expresses our appreciation to the Secretary General and the fund managers for all their hard work.

The OSCE is, and will continue to be, a major contributor to regional security and stability. The Organization is as necessary and relevant as it was in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and in 1990 with the signing of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Our collective commitments to this Organization are just as real. Despite individual budget constraints and other challenges, the 57 participating States must continue to provide the OSCE with the resources it needs to carry out its mandate, especially in the independent institutions and in the field operations. We believe that the proposal presented today provides a reasonable basis for future discussions, and we support the Secretary General's commitment to actively engage with participating States on this proposal.

The United States strongly supports the efforts of the OSCE's independent Institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. And we will seek to ensure that these Institutions have robust budgets and sufficient resources to carry out their important mandates.

Mr. Chair, we also share your concerns over the politicization of the budget process in the past and we urge participating States not to politicize the budgets for these Institutions this year.

The OSCE's field operations remain the face of the OSCE on the ground, where they contribute to regional integration, democratic reforms, good governance, and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Participating States must provide the field operations with the resources they need to support this important work.

The United States regrets the omission of the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) from this year's Unified Budget Proposal. As a long-term contributor to stability and security in Central Asia, the BMSC should be supported by all participating States. In our view, a reliable funding source would allow the BMSC to more efficiently plan ahead and serve as a stable platform for the cooperation and coordination that enhance border security throughout the region.

Finally, we encourage the Secretariat to fully implement cost-containment measures and to offset budget increases with efficiencies. We note the importance of monitoring and evaluation, sound management practices, and financial accountability throughout the OSCE executive structures. We believe it is time to begin a serious discussion on reform of the budget process with the goal of transitioning to a two-year budget cycle.

The United States looks forward to working with the Italian Chairmanship as it takes the lead on budget negotiations. We stand ready to work constructively to reach consensus on a timely budget that supports the mandate of the OSCE to promote comprehensive security across the entire OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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