



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the CIO Report on Helsinki +40 Working Group

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 25, 2013

We thank the Ukrainian Chairmanship for its effort to move the Helsinki +40 process forward. In particular, we appreciate the Chairmanship's perception and Food for Thought papers and its ongoing work to move our discussions beyond the general and towards the practical. We agree with the Chair's and the participating States' hope that the process should serve to increase trust and confidence, and note that the best way to strengthen that trust is through implementation of all of our current commitments.

The United States, in previous meetings of the working groups, has shared practical suggestions for consideration. In responding to the Chairmanship's report today and looking forward, we want to touch upon a few core themes. In our most recent discussion, several participating States articulated the essence of our challenge: we must identify what we want to do, before we adjust our processes and procedures. However, as long as all participating States do not work in good faith to implement all OSCE commitments, it will be difficult to identify shared goals.

In essence, the overarching goal of the Helsinki +40 process should be to spur participating States to act according to the enduring principles of Helsinki and to comply with all their OSCE commitments. In the view of the United States, the Helsinki +40 process must restore respect for the OSCE's human dimension commitments as an essential element of comprehensive security, and refocus our efforts on ways to further the full implementation of those commitments. The fact that we have not yet had a discussion on our essential human dimension commitments is troubling.

If there is political will, the Helsinki +40 process could provide participating States with an opportunity to review the progress made in advancing all three dimensions of security since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, to address our shortcomings in advancing our goals - both as individual participating States and as an Organization - and to identify new applications for the OSCE enduring principles that will help us meet the challenges facing our region in the coming decades.

As we have previously noted, it is essential that civil society has a voice and prominent role in Helsinki +40 discussions and that the OSCE's processes and procedures be enhanced to take into greater account the important role and input of civil society. Moreover, the practical methods by which individuals exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms contained in binding international legal documents and reflected in the Helsinki Final Act and

subsequent documents have evolved substantially over time. The Helsinki +40 process must reflect this evolution, including by taking full advantage of Digital Age technologies to reach out to and to engage with civil society actors. We welcome greater input from civil society in our Helsinki +40 discussions. This process cannot succeed without them.

The Helsinki +40 process should also identify and promote new applications of the Helsinki principles, taking into account new technologies, growing interdependence, the growing cross-border linkages of peoples and civil society, and new and emerging threats to our common security. After all, one of the key aims of Helsinki +40 is to ensure that the OSCE is an effective tool in meeting the full range of 21st century challenges.

The process cannot shy away from efforts to resolve the protracted conflicts. The failure to uphold commitments to peacefully resolve these conflicts continues to affect every aspect of our work. Our goal must be to achieve tangible results. We encourage the current Chairmanship and the successive Swiss and Serbian Chairmanships to do more to incorporate discussion of the conflicts into the Helsinki +40 process.

After several months of discussion, this process now requires greater structure to move us closer towards consensus on many divisive and challenging issues. The process therefore needs a sub-working group structure, organized by dimension, with an additional group on cross-dimensional issues, and one looking at improving efficiency and effectiveness within the Organization itself. The Forum for Security Cooperation already has an established working group for this purpose, so work on political-military dimension issues should be conducted in FSC Working Group B, as appropriate. Under the direction of the Chairmanship, these sub-groups should prepare issues for discussion by the full Working Group and for follow-up. It is essential that the process review and identify areas within each dimension where work is most needed, as all dimensions are necessary to the comprehensive concept of security.

The goal of the Helsinki +40 process should be more substantial than merely reiterating a “commitment to the concept of comprehensive, cooperative, equal and indivisible security.” Rather, by 2015, the OSCE participating States should be in a position to demonstrate meaningful progress toward that goal. Such progress, first and foremost, should be concrete improvements by participating States in their implementation of existing OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.