



United States Mission to the OSCE

**Response to Foreign Minister Mitov
of Bulgaria and Secretary General Svilanović
of the Regional Cooperation Council**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 29, 2015

The United States warmly welcomes you, Foreign Minister Mitov and Secretary General Svilanović, to the Permanent Council. We appreciate your remarks, which highlighted the important work that the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) have undertaken.

Mr. Foreign Minister, Mr. Secretary General – we understand that Southeastern Europe is still in transition, and that its people seek a lasting reconciliation of past conflicts while building bridges toward a future with the rest of Europe. The work of your organizations in forging a cooperative regional dynamic is admirable, and we applaud the efforts you have made to date.

We also recognize that many states in Southeastern Europe, and indeed, across the entire OSCE space, are facing an unprecedented migration and refugee crisis, with wide-ranging humanitarian and security implications. As the OSCE looks to step up its own role in helping manage the crisis, the SEECP and RCC also may be able to make important contributions in this regard. Such contributions could include, but would not be limited to, facilitating technical assistance among Balkan states on migrant and refugee flows, and providing early warning over the establishment of new migration routes into and via the Southeastern Europe region.

In listening to your presentation, Mr. Secretary General, I am struck the many shared points of focus between the OSCE and the RCC. Anti-corruption, sustainable energy development, climate change, water management, cyber security, and counterterrorism are among the areas where both organizations are actively engaged. We recognize that your organization has important insights and experience in these areas and encourage you to continue to engage with the OSCE Secretariat and through your member states to the benefit of the wider OSCE community. We also suggest continued dialogue to bring about the fullest possible harmonization of activities between the OSCE and the RCC.

In closing, let me thank you both for coming to this Council and reaffirming your shared commitment to cooperation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.