



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and the Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 26, 2022

Ambassador Rogov and Director Wolters, welcome to the Permanent Council and thank you for your informative reports. The United States values and supports the OSCE Program Office in Bishkek's work in all three dimensions of security with government and civil society throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. We congratulate the people of the Kyrgyz Republic for exercising their political and civil rights in the November 2021 parliamentary elections, and we concur with the preliminary findings of the OSCE election observation mission. We commend the Programme Office in Bishkek's support in advance of the elections, most notably organizing a capacity-building seminar for 170 district election commissioners including members from all provinces of the country.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has raised serious concerns about increased vulnerability to trafficking in human beings throughout the OSCE region. Your Office's work to support the Kyrgyz government's implementation of key counter-trafficking commitments and international obligations, including through the hosting of the first nationwide National Simulation Exercise on counter-trafficking, is therefore all the more important now.

We continue to support the OSCE's essential work on the removal and disposal of Samin rocket fuel residue in the Kyrgyz Republic and look forward to the design of a new project to conclude this effort to eliminate a dangerous environmental hazard. We value your raising awareness about environmental security and climate change and your encouragement of public participation in environmental decision-making.

We appreciate the Programme Office's efforts to partner with the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic to enhance its capacity to combat violent extremism and radicalization in detention facilities that lead to terrorism. We strongly support the Programme Office's provision of critical assistance to National Human Rights Institutions and the National Centre for Prevention of Torture to conduct monitoring visits and expand research on torture and gender-based violence in the penitentiary system.

We also commend your Office's promotion of government transparency and your support in drafting and implementing anti-corruption policies. Your work promoting judicial and legal reforms by facilitating capacity-building activities for 1,275 Kyrgyz officials plays a crucial role in ensuring adherence to our shared OSCE commitments.

We continue to monitor ongoing border tensions between the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan and urge your Office to facilitate mediation between the two countries.

We are pleased, Director Wolters, with the plans for expanding research and doctoral training opportunities at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The soon to be launched Masters of Arts program in Human Rights and Sustainability will help train a new generation of scholars and practitioners to uphold our OSCE commitments.

We thank you both, and please also extend our appreciation to your talented staff, for your efforts to facilitate productive cooperation among the OSCE, the Kyrgyz Republic, and civil society in the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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