

17 June 2010

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Ambassador Kopaj, OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

By Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 17, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj. We thank you for your comprehensive report and we appreciate your dedication and strong leadership.

The United States supports the excellent work being conducted in all three dimensions by the OSCE's Project Coordinator in Ukraine, and we commend your efforts to strengthen your partnership with the Ukrainian Government and other partners. We also appreciate your efforts to improve the fiscal and administrative management of OSCE projects in Ukraine.

We also commend the PCU's strategic approach to addressing democracy development, good governance, and rule of law concerns. Ukraine has made significant strides in areas such as freedom of association, speech, and the media in recent years, and it is important that this progress be protected and advanced under the current government. The anti-corruption, human rights, and institutional capacity building activities carried out by the office will further enhance good governance in Ukraine.

We agree that the PCU is well-positioned, in collaboration with government officials and academics, to provide expert advice and assistance to election-support activities, particularly election observation training, electoral legislation reform, implementation of the state Voter Register, and other efforts aimed at strengthening training capacities of the Central Election Commission. Whenever possible and appropriate, we recommend the PCU utilize the expertise of ODIHR in these efforts.

We also strongly support the substantial work of the PCU in building capacity and awareness of state institutions and civil society organizations, including more effectively combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence.

We note the PCU's change in emphasis regarding funding support for civil society organizations. We continue to support, as noted in your Strategic Plan, a continued emphasis on facilitating dialogue and cooperation between civil society and national and local governments and urge the PCU to continue its important efforts in this area.

We also support the Office's continued efforts in the politico-military, economic, and environmental areas. In this regard, we strongly support any Ukrainian authorities' efforts in rehabilitating areas contaminated by Explosive Remnants of War. We urge enhanced efforts to ensure that there is no duplication of effort between the OSCE and the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund or any other similar activities.

We welcome PCU activities aimed at supporting the Ukrainian Armed Forces as they downsize, and we are pleased at the success rate of 76 percent of retired military service persons finding employment within three months of PCU training. We continue to prefer, however, that the PCU focus on institutional reform and train-the-trainer activities rather than on individuals in order to maximize the impact.

We are interested in the potential of the PCU's continuing work in promoting e-Governance solutions, and look forward to learning of its results. We see value in enabling citizens to use information and communication technologies to receive better quality services from authorities and improve business development regulatory frameworks.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.