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## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Closure of USAID Mission in Zagreb**

As delivered by Bruce Turner,  
Acting Director of the Office of European Security and Political Affairs,  
Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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On May 15, the United States Government held a closing ceremony for its United States Agency for International Development Mission in Zagreb, Croatia and expects that the Mission will close its doors in June. The Croatian people deserve full credit for making free and fair elections a matter of routine, for building a vibrant economy and nurturing a dynamic civil society. The U.S. government is proud to have assisted in that effort, along with other international actors such as the OSCE. Over the course of the past fifteen years, the U.S. has provided more than \$350 million in assistance to Croatia, which has helped stabilize that country and put it firmly on the road to democratic development and free market prosperity.

A key part of the U.S. effort was the establishment of legacy institutions: civil society and government structures that will live and function after the end of assistance programs. We firmly believe that Croatia's momentum is now self-sustaining, making external foreign assistance unnecessary. We believe the OSCE should look to this example. We agreed to close our Mission, but open an office concentrating on the housing care program in Croatia and monitoring war crimes trials. A key focus of the office's work this year should be support for Croatia's media, NGOs, and governmental structures to put in place the institutional basis which would allow the OSCE also to close its office by the end of this year, yet leave all participating States comfortable that the key goals and objectives of our office will continue to be fulfilled even after the OSCE closes its doors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.