



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Address by Foreign Minister of Austria Sebastian Kurz

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 30, 2014

Mr. Minister, the irony of us welcoming you to this house today is not lost upon us, but that welcome is sincere and it is warm. Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with us today. At the outset, I would like to express my country's deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which Austria hosts this Organization. We are all deeply in your debt for Austria's generous hospitality.

Austria and the United States work closely together bilaterally and through various international organizations. Our cooperation at the OSCE is no exception. We both strongly support the OSCE's activities to counter trafficking in human beings, including highlighting the importance of prevention of trafficking in human beings for domestic servitude in diplomatic households, and we worked closely to negotiate a robust addendum to the OSCE's Action Plan to combat this horrific practice. Human trafficking is also an important area of cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. We welcome Austria's chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and look forward with anticipation to next month's joint OSCE/Council of Europe anti-human trafficking conference.

The U.S. and Austria share a deep interest in continued security in the Balkans, where Austria is one of the largest contributors of troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. At the same time, we both recognize that the OSCE should reorient itself and increase its focus on Central Asia. Your country has demonstrated welcome leadership in supporting OSCE efforts to address our common security challenges in this important region. We particularly appreciate Austria's ongoing support for extra-budgetary training projects at the Border Management Staff College, and we hope that this year's unified budget will include funding for the College, allowing it to continue these valuable activities. We also greatly appreciate Austria's past contributions to the ODIHR Election Support Teams in Afghanistan, and are hopeful that you will provide robust support to the team ODIHR will send to assist in this year's Presidential elections.

Minister Kurz, the United States looks forward to deepening and strengthening its partnership with Austria as we continue to work towards common goals at the OSCE. Thank you again for being with us here today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.