



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the OSCE Economic and Environment Activities Coordinator Ambassador Vuk Žugić

As delivered Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry R. Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 14, 2019

Mr. Ambassador, we welcome your focus on energy security and combating corruption – two U.S. priorities for the OSCE's Second Dimension – as well as your emphasis on connectivity. The initiatives described in your report for creating and maintaining secure energy networks, including an innovative virtual tool, are examples of ways the OSCE can harness the digital transformation to counter threats to security. Fundamentally, energy security depends on the diversification of energy sources, supplies, and routes and on reducing barriers to energy trade and development through open, transparent, and market-based energy sectors. We urge you to continue to operate from that basis.

In the area of connectivity, the United States welcomes international trade and transport practices that strictly adhere to the rule of law. These practices lay the foundation for long-term peace, stability, and prosperity. Unfortunately, some countries ignore this pragmatic understanding of connectivity. They opt instead for an understanding that favors political expediency over their people's long-term prosperity, and they push for political and economic integration before meeting necessary standards and upholding OSCE principles and commitments.

We recognize that corruption and organized crime continue to be significant barriers to progress in promoting trade and enhancing connectivity. These obstacles do indeed warrant OSCE attention. Digital technologies can assist anti-corruption efforts; political will and sustained attention over time is even more imperative to tackling corruption. We look forward to seeing how the Special Representative on Combating Corruption engages with your office to deliver concrete results. OSCE participating States have agreed to fight corruption in six Ministerial Council decisions and declarations in as many years, and, in our view, it is time we implement those commitments.

The United States welcomes your report's emphasis on gender mainstreaming. We agree with your assessment that "gender inequality exacerbates vulnerabilities, increases security risks, and limits the effectiveness and responsiveness of policies." Our Second Dimension Ministerial Council decisions – and simple logic – commit us to countering gender inequality wherever we see it.

In conclusion, Ambassador, your report reminds us that the Second Dimension is not a forum for so-called “non-political” discussions, think-tank conceptualizing, or entertaining pet projects that have consistently failed to reach consensus. Rather, across the OSCE’s three dimensions, we must focus instead on producing results that address critical security issues. We have made many commitments – including in the priority areas of energy security, anti-corruption, and connectivity – and we stand ready to work with you and others to implement them.

Thank you again, Ambassador, for your report to the Permanent Council. We look forward to continuing our excellent relations and productive partnership.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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