



**United States Mission to the OSCE**  
**Statement on Upcoming Local Elections  
in Macedonia**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Gary Robbins  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 21, 2013

The United States calls the Permanent Council's attention to the local elections being held this coming Sunday, March 24, in Macedonia. We were pleased to see that leaders of the various political parties in Macedonia were able to reach a constructive agreement that would allow the elections to take place as originally scheduled. We wish to thank ODIHR for organizing the Needs Assessment Mission, and the subsequent long-term and short-term observation teams, and also extend our appreciation to those participating States who have contributed secondees to these missions. We echo ODIHR Director Lenarcic's call at last week's Permanent Council for participating States to improve their response to ODIHR's requests for observer mission support.

As part of its progress towards greater Euro-Atlantic integration, Macedonia should continue to consolidate its democratic reforms and strengthen its democratic institutions. Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of any democracy. We call on Macedonia's officials and its citizens to ensure the elections on March 24 are indeed free, fair, and transparent, and free from violence or coercion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.