



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Statement by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 13, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes you to the Permanent Council, President Grybauskaitė. Lithuania has already demonstrated strong leadership in its 2011 Chairmanship of the organization while concurrently presiding over the Community of Democracies, and we look forward to working with you, Ambassador Norkus and his very able team, and the rest of our partners as we move toward the Vilnius ministerial.

We firmly believe our common security must be rooted in our shared OSCE principles and commitments. When we gathered in Astana last December, we recommitted ourselves to building a "free, democratic, common and indivisible" security community, free of dividing lines, where the use of force is unthinkable, human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully respected, and economic and environmental cooperation is the norm. While we have made progress toward this vision, we must do more to ensure full respect for our shared principles and implementation of our shared commitments.

For the United States, the OSCE's work in the human dimension remains the highest priority, and we strongly support Lithuania's emphasis on the human dimension. We welcome your commitment to advancing freedom of the media and expression, applaud your recognition of the importance of independent human rights institutions, and support your efforts to ensure that civil society can operate freely. Only by ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms can we guarantee truly comprehensive security in the OSCE space. In that regard, we welcome Chairman-in-Office Azubalis's upcoming trip to Tunisia to consult with the government on ways the OSCE might assist their budding democracy.

Clearly, the protracted conflicts pose a lingering challenge to our common security. We appreciate Lithuania's intent to build on the OSCE's past contributions and look for ways to boost confidence. We remain committed to the restoration of a meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia and to the achievement of concrete improvements in the security and humanitarian situations on the ground. We also remain committed to the soonest possible resumption of formal 5+2 negotiations on the Transnistria conflict and to the implementation of measures to promote freedom of movement and reduce political-military tensions, even as we seek a larger settlement of the conflict. And we remain firmly committed to a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, under the auspices of the Minsk Group.

Key to the OSCE's future is a greater capacity to respond to crises and to prevent conflict from erupting or reigniting. We are grateful for the efforts undertaken by Lithuania to ensure the success of the Community Security Initiative in Kyrgyzstan, and we appreciate Lithuania's approach to following up on the Corfu Process and on discussions before and at the Astana Summit. We are convinced the time has come to take concrete actions, making optimal use of existing resources and tools and addressing areas where gaps have been identified.

Also key to the OSCE's future are our efforts to strengthen conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. We remain committed to materially improving military transparency by updating the 1999 Vienna Document.

Ensuring our common security also necessarily involves efforts to counter transnational threats, such as terrorism and violent extremism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber attacks, organized crime, and illicit trafficking in weapons, drugs, and people. Responding to these threats – and bolstering stability in states such as Afghanistan – requires sustained cooperation.

In the economic and environmental dimension, we seek to achieve real progress in efforts to prevent or mitigate energy-related crises, promote good governance, and facilitate efficient cross-border trade.

Given sufficient political will, Madam President, we believe we can deliver on the promise of the OSCE's commitments and ensure comprehensive, lasting security. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support Lithuania's Chairmanship of our organization.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.